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By Wm. Robert L. Winthrop.

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SOME
INDICATIONS
OF THE
VALUE AND APPRECIATION
OF
MR NYE'S COLLECTION
OF THE
WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS.
(EXHIBITED IN NEW-YORK IN 1848, 1849, 1850, AND 1858.)
WITH A FEW BRIEF
PAPERS AND NOTES
UPON
ART AND ART CRITICISM.

MACAO, 1858.

11,76

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PREFACE.

A very few explanatory words by way of introduction are necessary.

Upon effecting the purchase of the Collection—about one half of which was bought and taken to New-York in the Winter of 1847-48, the remainder in that of 1848-49—Mr. Nye gave pledges to the Lady of whom he bought it—(whose Husband had collected the works in a period of 30 to 40 years, before his then recent death, in various Countries of Europe as well as in England)—not to offer it for sale in England nor to expose her name.

*These pledges he has kept to this day : nor does he see that any disclosures which he could make would now add to its appreciation.**

External proofs of authenticity are in themselves perfectly worthless, as the repeated frauds in the history of Art have shewn : and those who depend upon them are but indifferent judges of the Works of the Old Masters.

Any attentive reader of the following pages, who is conversant with the subject, will not fail to remark the incontestable value of their collective evidence of the authenticity of the Works : nor can any intelligent and unprejudiced person hesitate to acknowledge that pretensions which have stood for years the ordeal of popular disbelief and merits which have asserted their power against preconceived doubts, “which offer a precise contrast to the circumstances of perfect faith under which visitors view the public Collections of Europe,” can be other than legitimate.†—

We have only to read the works of the greatest of living connoisseurs—Professor Waagen—to learn how little regard is paid by such to external proof: The case of Lord Ellesmere’s “Madonna del Passeggio”—formerly in the Orleans Gallery and before that in Queen Christina’s and then attributed to Raphael—may be instanced.

And as to the non-existence of Collections in England ten years ago, of which there was no public record or general knowledge, the same publications of Dr. Waagen have in the meantime exposed the error of such an assumption and fully confirmed the opinions of Sir Edmund Head and Professor Fielding which are quoted in the following pages.

* Various money receipts for different Pictures found among the Papers of the Collector were delivered to Mr. Nye vouching for purchases in Italy, Belgium, France, Spain, &c; but these have not been exhibited for the obvious reason that the name of the Collector would thus be exposed. A letter containing other vouchers was lost.

Extract of Lecture of C. R. Leslie R. A.

+ “We recur again and again to the contemplation of images of terror and grandeur that have impressed, as they do us, past generations, and shall still impress those to come ; and so far from their expression becoming weaker at every successive view, it grows, in reality, stronger and stronger ; for it is among the most remarkable qualities of every work of genius that it gains on us with time, whilst that which is merely specious strikes most at first, and never again with the same effect.”



SOME INDICATIONS OF THE VALUE AND APPRECIATION OF
MR. NYE'S COLLECTION OF THE WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS.

Letter of the late Honorable Franklin Dexter* of Massachusetts intimating his purpose to endeavor to establish Mr. Nye's Gallery permanently in the United States.—

BOSTON, MARCH 1ST, 1849.

DEAR SIR,

"I have this moment your letter and Catalogues. I have no time to answer now—further than to say that I shall see one or two of our most distinguished *millionaires* who are also men of taste and if I receive *any* encouragement I shall propose to you to ask several of your best Artists (say Huntington, Durand, Gray and others—whom I omit only from want of time to name them) and if you please one or two (very few) of really good judges of Art who are not Artists, to meet me at your Gallery on some day early next week to compare ideas and projects.

You understood me to rate my own critical abilities rather too high in saying that I should not regard external evidence. I meant merely that I should not yield my own clear opinion of merit to it; nor do I undertake to be as good a judge as the *professional* Gentlemen, though I have been a *practical* Artist myself for twenty five years: still as the lawyers say, "every man is to be believed in his own art."

Yours truly,

(Signed) F. DEXTER.

Do not however act on this until you hear further from me."

G. Nye, Jr. Esq. New York.

NOTE—He found that the Boston Millionaires preferred "*Railway and Factory stocks*" to Art.

* I was told by the highest authority upon such a point that Mr. Dexter's *Ipsé dixit* in respect to the Old Masters would be accepted at Washington in preference of any other person's. G. N. Jr.

GENERAL TESTIMONIAL OF THE PRINCIPAL ARTISTS OF
NEW YORK IN FAVOR OF MR. NYE'S COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS.

Recognizing the importance of a public GALLERY of the WORKS of the GREAT MASTERS of PAINTING and SCULPTURE in this CITY, and considering MR. NYE'S COLLECTION now at the LYCEUM GALLERY in Broadway worthy to form the nucleus of such a GALLERY, we hereby cordially express a hope that his endeavours to place his COLLECTION permanently with us may meet with the co-operation of our fellow Citizens."

JUNE 9TH 1849.

J. VANDERLYN.
M. K. KELLOGG.
THOS. P. ROSSITER.
WM. S. MOUNT.
THOMAS. HICKS.
LOUIS LANG.
JOHN T. PEELE.
B. H. MULDER.

D. HUNTINGTON.
HENRY PETERS GRAY.
THOMAS S. CUMMINGS.
WM. PAGE.
T. A. RICHARDS.
PAUL P. DUGGAN.
J. F. E. PRUDHOMME.
J. H. SHEGOGUE.

NOTE.—Other Artists were absent.

COLLECTION OF THE WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS,

Now Exhibited at the Lyceum Gallery, 563 Broadway.

HAZLITT said of the time-honoured works of Art, "They are not good because they are old, but old because they are good!" One of the satisfactions of the traveller who visits for the first time the galleries of Europe, is the conviction which strengthens as he goes from one work of high Art to another, that there is a *meaning* in the reputation of the Old Masters. So potent is mere fashion, so overwhelming the influence of a heartless conventionalism, that one is led sometimes rashly to conclude against all pretension; but the estimation in which succeeding generations have agreed to hold the painters of the older schools, is happily not to be classed among the results of a poor imitativeness, or servile submission to the dicta of others. Their appeal is to something beyond technical rules, and above the power of prescription; and the response of the imagination and the heart asks no sanction from connoisseurs or critics.

It seems strange, since pictures afford so large a portion of the pleasures enjoyed by intelligent Americans in foreign travel, that a collection of pictures like that whose title we have placed at the head of these remarks, should attract so little attention in New-York. The reason assigned is, the number of counterfeits that have been palmed off upon our community in times past as antique works, possessing neither merit nor genuineness, and dishonouring Art by asking admiration which no person of common sense could bestow.

But the collection at present exhibited here is the property of a person of unimpeachable respectability—a point of great importance as it regards the genuineness of the pictures; and possesses pictures which, in the opinion of the best judges, have a value wholly independent of the name and reputation of their authors.

The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence, by Titian, would, if it had been exhibited alone, have attracted more attention and interest than it has yet commanded as the centre of a magnificent collection. The "Flight into Egypt," of Murillo, certainly bears no unfavorable comparison with the famous "Trinity," of the same great master—one of the gems of the British National Gallery. Besides these we have specimens of Ruysdael, Holbein, Weenix, Jordans, Spagnoletto, Rembrandt, and more eminent names still; a Fornarina ascribed to Raphael by good judges; a Madonna of Carlo Dolce; an Ecce Homo, by Guido; etc., etc.; the whole comprising works that would be highly prized in any gallery in Europe.

We examined Mr. Nye's collection with some care, before visiting the principal collections abroad, in order to form such judgment as the uninstructed observer may of the value of these pictures; and it is no more than justice to say, that our opinion of the Lyceum Gallery was even higher after we had seen most of the great galleries between London and Naples, than while our range of comparison was well nigh limited to the achievements of our native artists and the copies of the Old Masters which have reached this country. We are the more willing to make this observation, because our opinion of these pictures is confirmed by that of those among us who have a right to judge—artists and connoisseurs, as well as mere lovers of the beautiful.

Mr. Nye's hope in bringing his collection to New-York, was, that in this great centre of the wealth and enterprise of the nation, the idea would be adopted of making this gallery the centre or nucleus of a great national one, which we must have sooner or later, and which will probably find its natural position in this city. But we have thus far been too much occupied, whether with revolutions abroad, or gold-hunting, or president-making at home, to turn our attention to the fine arts in so efficient a mode. We seem to be awaiting a period of leisure which may never arrive, before we set about the means of that refinement which alone can make leisure valuable or even safe.

We are happy to observe that strangers visiting the city have learned to consider the Lyceum Gallery as one of the legitimate shows. This, with the throng which fills the Art-Union Gallery daily, as well as the Dusseldorf Collection, gives us good hope for the future, while we lament the comparative carelessness of the present.

THE "OLD MASTERS."

MR. EDITOR:—Not having seen in your paper any notice of the paintings of the "Old Masters," now on exhibition in this city, permit me to call attention to the subject. It is a fact, one would think, to attract every Christian scholar, that here in this crowded market of fashionable and vulgar follies, we have what our country has never before seen, some of the noblest conceptions of Titian, Murillo, Caracci, and Rubens.

It is our boast that, in an age of bald, bare Puritanism we are upbuilding the Church of God in the "beauty of holiness," and breathing into the mind of the time the soul of a more genial Christian culture. And yet it has ever been one of the faults of our popular Protestantism that it is a religion of wire-drawn dogma, of narrow polemics, of hard intellectual character, wanting in those elements of beauty that take hold of the imagination and heart of man. We want a profounder feeling of the relation of art to religion—of the union between the true and the beautiful in Christianity. The principles of beauty are written on our souls, and the faith we profess, so far from destroying, fulfills our nature; it awakens all that is lofty and refining. Nay, Christianity has breathed the new life of its supernatural truths into Art, has recreated and hallowed it as the very soul of its forms. One of the grand aims of the Catholic Church in this day is to effect, as no other age has, a pure, true, union of religion with Art. Rome has ever held this a chief secret of her power, to gather into her system all the influences of music, architecture, painting; and thus has a halo of glory been thrown about even her falsehood, and many of refined culture been attracted to her bosom. Should it not be ours to learn this "open secret?" May there not be a union of intelligent faith, as well as of superstition, with beauty? And, again, the æsthetic tendency of our age, is taking still another false direction. In many minds it is becoming severed from all religious truth. Our modern æsthetic criticism is too often the echo of a transcendental unbelief. There is fear lest with educated men, amid the lifeless dogmas of the time, there shall spring up a mere religion of beauty, a flower of sentiment without Christian root; nay, it may be a rank poison-flower, whose perfume loads the atmosphere with death. We want more and more a culture that shall combine with reverent faith the warm glow of hallowed imagination; of a refined taste; that shall unite in itself all the elements of power, and breathe into this hard, iron-bound age the soul of a living, a loving, a beautiful religion. For this there needs the knowledge of Christian Art. • Let piety give its wealth without stint to the rearing of these noble gothic piles. Let us cherish every form in which the spirit of Christianity lives. But, more than all, perhaps, should we hallow the great masters of painting. It is this that springs from the soul of our religion. As the ancient mythology had its embodiment in sculpture, the art of the "seen and earthly" form, so painting has its analogy with a revelation of inward, spiritual, mysterious truth. We return here to the pictures which have suggested these remarks, hoping that so far from a digression, they will fall with as truthful a meaning on the minds of others, as they flowed naturally from the warm emotion the subject enkindles in ourselves. As we have sat, day by day, gazing on these noble works of the Christian past, (for it will be hardly necessary to say that the best of these relics of the "Old Masters" are on sacred subjects,) as we have dwelt on the fadeless faces, which speak from the canvas, the Christ in infancy and age, the Holy Mother, the "noble army of martyrs," and saints; we have seemed, in that still presence to enter behind the veil of shape and colouring, and to be brought anew into Catholic fellowship; we have felt as if more of the sublime mystery of Christian truth and Christian holiness breathed on us from the inspirations of Art than from the books of theology. There is in them a majesty of repose—a serene depth of devotion—a light and life that flow from the religion of God alone. *None can look upon them without the feeling that only an age of faith could have created them. And it is the heart of Christianity, which inspired them, that alone can interpret their beauty.* The mere connoisseur may measure them by the standard of nature, or the rules of science, but the Christian scholar, instinct with the truths they embody, beholds in them the supernatural in its "glorified body." We need not dwell on them in detail. It would be hard to exhaust their variety. Each of these sacred paintings utters some noble truth, some living affection. Each, though "its voice is not heard," has "speech and language" all its own.

Each is a living oracle of Christianity. As we pass from one face to another of the Christ, in the various conceptions of Murillo, of Carracci, of Rubens, of Bartolomeo, of Guido, and the rest, we feel what an exhaustless mystery is in that God-man; a mystery which has inspired so often the vision of devout genius—has been and is still shadowed forth in so many forms of beauty. Among these paintings a few stand conspicuous in their excellence. The “Flight into Egypt” of Murillo realizes more fully to us than any other work of art, the blessed bond of human love in which that Divine infancy was nursed; in that *Christ* is the yearning child, in that *Mary* the most complex yet harmonious conception, mingling all the emotions of maternal tenderness with the instinct of reverence—“The Mother struggling with the Worshipper.”

The Mystic Marriage of St. Catharine is of rare charm. A saintly purity, a virgin holiness is on the face of the fair martyr, that diffuses itself like an atmosphere around us. Our eyes and souls are fastened on that one countenance; and even the lesser figures, saints, cherubs, noble as they are, seem “dark” with the “excessive bright” of that central object. The “Resurrection,” by Rubens, is a work of vast power; the form seems instinct with the fullness of a new risen life; every look, every motion of foot and hand reveals the conqueror over sin and the grave—the shroud drops from Him, and the stone rolls as if conscious from the gate of the tomb! But of all these paintings the Titian seems to us the noblest. In the “Martyrdom of St. Lawrence” is embodied the omnipotence of Christian Faith. We sit and peer into those deep masses of shade until the scene with its wild contrast of light and darkness, stillness and motion, overwhelms us with terror, but at last our thoughts fix unmoved on one grand object; we forget the glaring torches, the executioners, the burning pile; we behold only the sublime sufferer calm in pain, gazing upward with a look that “sees heaven opened, and Christ at the right hand of God.” It is a marvel of Art. It is enough to repay him who looks on it with the richest recompense of holy thought. But we will add no more, save only to commend to every scholar and every Christian man the study of these noble paintings. And, if the artist, to catch some hint of outward beauty, will sit for months in dumb rapture before some master-work of genius, much more may we promise to him, who comes in this spirit of faith, that he shall return with the feeling of one, who has dwelt in the atmosphere of spiritual beauty, and who cannot but bear away somewhat of its perfume upon his mind and heart. PHILOKALOS.

From the Sunday Morning News.

In the “Gallery of the Old Masters,” in the Lycum Building, (a gallery by the bye, with so many attractions, as to make it the most instructive, as well as delightful place to spend an hour, in the city,) is a fine landscape by Richard Wilson, the great English landscape painter of the last century. All who wish to acquire correct taste, and sound judgment in this branch of art, should deeply study this masterly performance. It puts to shame and confusion, the misled inanities of too many of the works of the present age. It vindicates the great truth we have before enunciated, that labor does not appear predominantly, in the works of a true genius, and that but little else is seen in the works of artists less gifted. In this gallery, also, are seen a great variety of subjects from the old and most renowned painters; here is grouping, drawing, and colouring, with an intention and a result. Subjects are here presented to the eye, which indicate the freedom of the age to which they belong, and the forcible and felicitous genius of the masters to whom they are ascribed.

THE GALLERY OF PAINTINGS BY THE OLD MASTERS (at the Lyceum Buildings, No. 563 Broadway.) has recently received large and exceedingly beautiful and valuable accessions, which have been awaiting notice in the *Day-Book* for some days.

The collection is now unrivaled by anything on this side of the Atlantic, and approaches in the magnificence of its treasures of Art to the Imperial, Royal, Princely, and Ducal Galleries of the Old World.

These noble works of ancient Art now constitute the greatest attraction which this city has ever presented to people of of taste and refinement. It ought to be the pride and boast of the city, which is honored with its location here.—*Day-Book*.

Extract of a Notice of the Collection from the Democratic Review of August, 1848.

"LYCEUM GALLERY.—It is little dreamt that we have in our midst several paintings whose extraordinary value may be measured at once by the redoubtable names of the great masters who have produced them—Titian, Rubens, Murillo, Raphael. The pulse beats faster and the breath grows thicker of every true worshipper of Art at bare mention of these high priests, the divinity of whose genius has thrown over the temple where they administered a radiance which ages have not dimmed and a halo which will fill the soul of the initiated for ages yet to come with awe and wonder. It is not to their technical skill alone, prodigious as it was, that such homage is due, nor to their handicraft, which talent inspired and true taste guided, but rather to that revelation of soul which in the eloquence and intensity of its expression raises the mind of the spectator from the material work he regards, up to spiritual contemplations; from 'nature up to nature's God.' And herein consists the merit, the ability, the purpose of great Works of Art, which assailing the senses make prisoner of the most careless and rudest fancy, and thus refine and spiritualize thousands, dead to all other softening influences. The masses which consume their daily strength in heavy labors seek recreation in hours of repose, and to them at such moments books or discourses offer no charm; nay, repel them by their dry, uninteresting, and laborious details. But are these masses to be given up; abandoned to the vulgar and debasing influence which, in our country, unhappily, are the only resource for the poor when freed from their daily tasks and abroad for pleasure? Look to it, philanthropy! legislate for it, patriotism! Endeavor to provide from motives of sympathy and safety such amusements for our laboring population as will draw them away from gross and corrupting habits and inspire them with pure and elevating aspirations.

"Such reflections as these animated us as we wandered delighted around and around the Lyceum Gallery, abounding in works of consummate merit. Our admiration and pleasure had only this drawback, that it was not shared by the thousands who passed it, debarred by the necessary obstacle of the price of admission. Why, we asked ourselves in wonder, does not our municipal government display its sagacity? Why does not one of our great parties manifest a politic interest in behalf of their constituents, by coming forward with a proposition to buy this rare collection of pictures and throw them open for public enjoyment? The shrewder governments of Europe have all over the Continent, as well as in England, readily and wisely adopted these easy means to conciliate popular good-will, and have voted enormous sums of the public money for gorgeous Galleries of Art, to which the people have most cheerfully, nay, with acclamation contributed, because they knew it was something, at least, for their own benefit. We repeat our surprise that some sharp-sighted tactician has not seized this simple chance of enhancing his reputation and doing a really sensible thing by bringing forward a proposition to buy the Lyceum Gallery, as the nucleus of a State gallery, to be permanently established in the city of New-York. Nay, we marvel that in a city famous for the tact and dexterity of its commercial 'practitioners,' a society of merchants has not ere this been formed for the purchase of this collection, that New-York may thus offer one solid claim the more to the curiosity of travellers and customers. The additional voyagers that would for these reasons give New-York a preference over all other rival markets, would, by the profit of these visits, pay for a dozen of such collections. We care not what the motives are which are brought into requisition so the holy cause of Art is advanced: that is all we seek; and in a country where utility is, happily, the *primum mobile*, we address it in the language of commerce.

"But is this collection of the Old Masters really worth our money? inquires the bargainer, in the cautious spirit of the mart. This is just what we propose to treat of in the very few words we deem necessary to add on this point. To those who are conversant with the works of the great masters we have already named, no proof of the originality and beauty of their productions in the Lyceum Gallery whatever is wanting, other than the sight of them. Incontestable evidence is there afforded of those master-touches which soar above imitation and defy the rust of time. There are few, however, who have made these glorious paintings the subject of their studies; and we are glad for the sake of Art to have it in our power to quote the ripened judgment of an authority equally competent and respectable. They have been deliberately examined by the most accomplished amateur artist and *connoisseur* who has ever visited this country, Capt. Payne,* lately of the English service; and the confidence placed in his judgment in France, Germany, and Italy, by various individuals of the highest rank, who make their collections under his guidance, warrant all in reposing the most complete faith in his opinions. He guarantees in the most absolute terms the originality of most of the paintings in the Lyceum Gallery. The only matter of astonishment with him, as it may well be with all others, is how it happens that such a collection, which, even in

* This Gentleman was the bearer of letters of Lord Hardinge, Lord Aberdeen, and Count D'Orsay.

times of disorder like the present, in Europe, would command exorbitant prices' should have found its way to this country. This mystery we confess ourselves altogether unable to solve; but the entire respectability of its proprietor satisfies us that the means employed have been perfectly legitimate. We can only explain it by conjecturing that some sudden necessity has compelled its former owner to part with these rare gems of Art, and it is possible that pride may have induced him to seek a secret sale and a foreign market. Be this as it may, we rejoice that such a gallery has found its way to our country; and the only question now should be how it may be disposed of in a way to serve Art, refine taste, and promote the public enjoyment. We hope sincerely that it is not the fixed intention of its present owner to preserve this gallery for his private use, and in that case we would urge it strenuously on our city councils to lose no time in ascertaining its value, and making it, as we have already suggested, a permanent object of attraction here. We are the more anxious and impatient on this point as we have learnt that a movement is on foot to remove it to Washington; for we have lately been apprised, on the best authority, that a committee of Congress, composed of gentlemen of known taste and public spirit, have, from the reputation of these paintings, which is spreading rapidly over the country, determined on the propriety of suggesting their purchase to Congress, as the nucleus of a National Gallery of Art to be established at Washington. We are struck with the extreme fitness of this proceeding, and doubt not that Congress will deem it perfectly unobjectionable; on the contrary, a very popular measure to endorse, for its whole object would be clearly the gratification of our citizens, from all parts of the United States, who are in the habit of visiting Washington, and who would gladly see another and rarer attraction added to the 'sights' of the 'city of magnificent distances,' which has really little else beside to attract. If, then, our rich and public-spirited community lose any time in seeking to retain this splendid collection of the great Masters, we shall probably hear at an early day of their transfer to Washington."

Comments upon the above notice, and remarks upon the collection, by the editors of the Home Journal.

"DEMOCRATIC REVIEW FOR AUGUST.—The *Review* takes strong ground in favor of a most valuable collection of paintings by the Old Masters, now being exhibited at the Lyceum. They are the property of Gideon Nye, jr., Esq., and are really what they profess to be, the originals of the great masters. It is suggested that they should be purchased by the state or federal government, to form a nucleus for the promotion of Art among us. The idea is one that ought not to be neglected. What greater boon could be conferred upon the growing talents among us than to place within reach some of the best specimens of the greatest masters?"

Notice from the Literary World, April 22d, 1848.

"PICTURES BY THE OLD MASTERS.—The American, and particularly the New-York market, has been overstocked with pictures, said to be the productions of the Old Masters. Most of them are third-rate copies, picked up from the picture dealers of the continent, and introduced to Americans with all the pompous epithets of connoisseurship, to be disposed of after sundry preliminary puffs, at a fashionable auction. The experiment, however, has been tried a little too often, and the public are not so easily deceived as formerly. The most unfortunate result, however, of such imposition still obtains. It has created a prejudice almost against the very name of 'old' pictures; and sensible lovers of Art have been so often disappointed, that they disregard the usual invitations to inspect works thus designated, on the same ground that wise men pass by the advertisements of quack medicines. It becomes, therefore, an editorial duty, to apprise the public when anything of genuine merit, in the way of pictures, is offered to their attention. We are happy, in accordance with this view, to commend, not merely to the notice, but to the study of our readers, the gallery recently opened in the Lyceum Building, 563 Broadway. The pictures there brought together were collected* in Europe, by

* This is slightly inexact, and in a form to lead to misapprehension—as, with the exception of about eight of the pictures, they formed part of a collection made during a period of thirty to forty years.

an American gentleman, with the view of forming a public gallery. The catalogue contains some of the most celebrated names in the history of painting. In our view, it is a matter of secondary importance to establish the originality of all these works, since, in almost every instance they are so decidedly marked with the characteristics of those to whom they are ascribed, that they adequately represent the school of each artist, and if not in all cases actually painted by masters, are doubtless the work of their most accomplished pupils, or most successful copyists. The picture entitled 'The Lair of the Serpents' is wonderfully true to nature; in the 'Satirical Piece' the cats are inimitable; several battle-pieces are gems; Cuypp's landscape glows with the sentiment of the hour; Giulio Romano's portrait of 'A Person of Dignity' bears authentic indications of being a veritable likeness of one of the Medici; the features resemble those of Lorenzo's bust in the Florence Gallery.* Vandyke's Prince Maurice in armor is a noble specimen of his unequalled school of portraiture. The 'Lot and his Daughters,' attributed to Rubens, is a piece of coloring which our young artists would do well to contemplate patiently. Numerous other works merit long and discriminating regard. It is seldom that so good an opportunity is afforded for becoming familiar with the best traits of the Old Masters. The pictures are very judiciously arranged; the light is excellent, and the room easy of access and very comfortably fitted up. We sincerely hope that the good taste and enterprise manifested in this exhibition will be rewarded by the cordial appreciation of all lovers of Art, and the frequent visits of the public."

* In the "Diary of the celebrated JOHN EVELYN published in 1854, I find the following valuable record of this fine picture, under date of November 16th 1677, when it was attributed to Raphael."

"My son and I dining at my Lord Chamberlain's, (Earl of Arlington) he showed us amongst others that incomparable piece of Raphael's being a Minister of State dictating to Guicciardini, the earnestness of whose face looking up in expectation of what he was next to write, is so to the life, and so natural, as I esteem it one of the choicest pieces of that admirable artist."

*Notice of the Evening Post.**

"WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS.—At the Lyceum Gallery, No. 563 Broadway, is to be seen a collection of the works of old painters, Italian, Flemish, and English, which contains many remarkable pictures. It is the same collection which we noticed a few days since, then exhibiting in the rooms of the Academy of Design. It is worth the inspection of all who are curious in regard to old paintings, and desire to obtain an idea of the manner of great artists, who belonged to a distinct age."

Notice of the Home Journal.

"IN addition to these places of resort, there is likewise one more boasting the same species of attraction, on a more mature scale. We allude to the Pictures by the Old Masters, at the Lyceum Building. Some of these pictures are perfect gems in their way. Those attributed to Titian, Raphael, Holbein, Carlo Dolce, and others, equally renowned in the annals of painting, unquestionably possess many of the traits of those masters, whether they are really originals or not. In fact, the gallery should be frequented by all students of Art and lovers of paintings. Beauties will grow upon the spectator, and the agreeable light and well arranged room make it a most desirable resort. The enterprising and tasteful gentleman who collected these works, will, we trust, find his labor compensated by the liberal support of the public."

* The Editor of the Post was the celebrated WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Notice from the Courier and Enquirer of May 4th.

"The *Collection of the Works of Old Masters*, brought to this country from Europe some months since, is now on exhibition at the Lyceum Gallery, No. 563 Broadway. We spoke in emphatic terms of the merits of this collection, when it was first thrown open to the public; and we can now only repeat our opinion that it contains pictures very far superior to any similar collection which our citizens have recently had an opportunity of visiting. No one who feels the slightest interest in Art should neglect to see it."

Notice of the Day Book.

"The Collection of Paintings by the most celebrated Masters of the Art, now exhibited at the Lyceum Building, No. 563 Broadway, (a little below Princestreet,) deserves more notice than it has hitherto received from the public. There is hardly a piece in the collection that does not indicate genius and skill in the painter; and several are of the highest order of excellence. The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence, Lot and his Daughters, the Fornarina, a Madonna, and several others, are pieces which will fix attention for days and weeks in succession. It seems impossible to satisfy the admiring eye, or do justice to their rare beauties in a briefer study of them.

"There is no reason to doubt that they are what they are claimed to be—veritable works of the great painters to whom they are attributed. Many of their peculiar excellencies of color and expression are such as must be beyond the powers of the most skillful professional copyist; and any artist capable of executing such works, whether of his own invention or not, must have been himself great and famous in the art.

"The pretensions made by the proprietor are modest; and it does not seem that he has fully employed the usual means of attracting public notice through the newspapers. His object is said to be, not to derive profit from the exhibition, nor to sell the pictures, but to lead to the formation of a permanent Public Gallery of Paintings, of which this collection may serve as a nucleus. The object is most laudable, and deserves the favor of every person of good taste and public spirit. In reference to this purpose, as well as the high merits of the principal works in this remarkable collection, the attention of judges and lovers of Art is due to them."

From the Musical Times, of June.

"GALLERY OF THE OLD MASTERS.—Our readers are doubtless aware that the splendid collection of pictures, which form the above gallery is now exhibited at the Lyceum Building, in Broadway, a little below Prince. We say our readers have heard of the collection, but we very much doubt if they have the least idea of the vast importance and the immense value of the Works of Art, which, through the liberal enterprise of a private gentleman, are now open for the inspection of all who possess a taste for the great and beautiful in Art.

"The good which cannot fail to arise from the presence of this genuine collection of works by the Old Masters can hardly be estimated. It will advance the taste and appreciation for all that is pure and true in Art at least half a century; it will prove an endless source of delight to amateurs and connoisseurs; it will teach the many to detect the true from the false, to judge between the sober natural tints of the old, and the flashy glaring coloring of the modern school; it will be an invaluable study for the young artists in this country, who will learn more by a patient and loving examination of the masterpieces in this gallery, than by all the Quixotic experiments, which rarely lead to aught but a mental confusion and a wild theorising, which produce abortion in Art, lamentable to behold. Look upon it in whatever light we will, we cannot but feel the importance of this gallery; and the city government, which should be sufficiently patriotic to secure this invaluable treasure to the city of New-York, and its inhabitants, forever, would gain for itself a lasting immortality, and would deserve the thanks of generations yet to come."

LETTER OF THE LATE HONORABLE FRANKLIN DEXTER OF MASSACHUSETTS FURTHER SHEWING
HIS HIGH APPRECIATION OF MR. NYE'S COLLECTION OF THE WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS AND,
INCIDENTALLY, HIS SOUND JUDGMENT IN ART.

GIDEON NYE, JR. ESQ.

BOSTON, APRIL 1ST, 1850.

My dear Sir,

"I have received your letter of the 30th March and the papers enclosed.

I cannot undertake to assist in the promotion of the proposed subscription here:—for the following reasons. Though there *should* be no local jealousy, or any but a generous rivalry in Art, among the Cities of our country, yet when I see the lamentable state of Art in Boston and compare it with its progress in New York, (not always however in the right direction,) I cannot be the means of diverting from our own wants any part of the very insufficient pecuniary encouragement we can hope to obtain.

The Institution you speak of is, if established, sure to belong to New-York:—we must apply the little we can raise here to our own urgent wants. We cannot hope to get even enough for those, and must content ourselves with something on a very small scale and try to make it very good. Our Artists are all deserting us and going or gone to New York. We must do something to keep them here or transfer all present hope of Art to your city. I am not yet prepared to do that.

If I saw, indeed, a prospect of creating in any part of the country a sound School and taste in Art, one which we would be content should be considered as National, I would willingly give up all local partialities, but I must be excused for saying that I see no present appearance of it; nor do I see how the transfer of your Gallery to a New-York Institution could benefit Art.

While your pictures, so well representing in many of the pieces, the best Schools, have been comparatively neglected, and such miserable trash as the Dusseldorf Collection crowded with visitors and the theme of fashionable conversation, I cannot have any great hopes in that direction.

In Boston we are not so bad only because we are nothing, excepting such good pictures as exist in private houses. But I hope and have been trying to begin something here, though I confess I do not yet see how it can be done. If I could select a few of your pictures I should think it the best thing I could do to begin with.

I fear the fact that New York is the "principal place of resort" is adverse to the hope of a good taste there,—the prevailing taste of Europe in Modern Art being so bad that I would rather trust to the hope of a spontaneous growth under the influence of the Old Masters only.

I am not sanguine as to American Art, or any Art in these days; but if we have any in America worth possessing it must be the work of the native mind using the knowledge of the Old Schools;—the *language* of Art we must take as we find it, expressing the Great Works of the sixteenth century, not as expressing the *Dauidisms* of the present day on the continent of Europe; but the thing to be expressed, the soul of art must be our own "or nothing worth." I rather look therefore even to the West for that, than to the commercial Emporium; but I fear it will be a long night before that day dawns in any part of America.

To secure, however, against that time the necessary knowledge, I desire much to see your Pictures retained in the Country, but unless it can be done by the \$5 lottery principle of Art Unions I cannot promise you any help from Boston.

Yours truly

(Signed) F. DEXTER.

I will transfer your papers to any one you shall name."

NOTE.—I named no one, for if with his full appreciation and his *prestige* in Art nothing could be done, it then seemed idle to consult Boston further; and yet I am of opinion that had I taken my Pictures there in the first instance the same period of time would not have been allowed to elapse without the adoption of measures for their permanent retention in that beautiful and wisdom-endowed city.

COPY of Letter of the distinguished Artist HENRY PETERS GRAY, with approval of those other eminent Artists DANIEL HUNTINGTON and THOMAS S. CUMMINGS, all of New York.

dated " *New York 16th May, 1850.*

" MY DEAR MR. NYE.

" It is with great regret that I find your beautiful GALLERY closed, and learn that the PICTURES will probably soon be sent from our Country. I had hoped that some arrangement might have secured them to our City, for the good of the public and of the Artists in particular. The prospect of this sudden loss to us, awakens in me the strong desire to retain them among us—a desire that has slumbered during our quiet enjoyment of their beauties, but which has never been other than sincere. Why cannot something be done at once to secure them, if only for the purpose of artistic study, which would finally turn to public good through the ripened fruits of our Works? I wish I had the power of persuasion to induce some co-operation to this effect, but I can only testify to the pleasure and instruction which I have gathered from their study and hope that the advantages which I esteem so highly may not be cut off, while we have as yet only tasted them.

" I know that you are aware of my estimation and admiration of your Gallery; but I cannot let this moment pass without expressing my regard for the generous enthusiasm you have evinced in your endeavours to establish an Institution in our City, whence we might have a proper guide in our uncertain search for the true path to Art.

" I would that I could second your exertions better than by acknowledging my own gratification and improvement from visiting your exhibition, and in believing the great necessity of such an one to the welfare of Painters; but it is quite beyond the sphere of the humble influences in which I move.

" I hope, however, that something will 'turn up' to recommend this matter to the serious consideration of our wealthy citizens, and that we shall soon have an opportunity of welcoming back your collection, in a Gallery suited to its merits."

(Signed by) HENRY PETERS GRAY.

GIDEON NYE, Esq.

(who had attained distinction as an Artist after studying in Europe some time before.)

" I fully concur with Mr. Gray in reference to the Paintings referred to."

(Signed by) THOS. S. CUMMINGS.

(Artist and Treasurer of the *National Academy of Design.*)

" I cordially agree in the expression of a strong admiration for the Pictures in Mr. Nye's Gallery, and with Mr. Gray, earnestly hope something may be done to retain them for our improvement and enjoyment."

(Signed by) D. HUNTINGTON.

(the very distinguished Artist whose Works are highly prized in both Europe and America.)

"NEW YORK CITY 8TH APRIL, 1850.

GIDEON NYE, JR, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

"I sincerely hope that your valuable collection of pictures may become the property of some public Institution and remain permanently in the Country. I am sure that were their value appreciated by our people, some efficient measures would be taken to secure them. If the study of the beautiful Arts is ever to find favor among us, there must first be made accessible the productions of the great Artists who have gone before us,—for it is an error to suppose excellence can be reached in many generations by beginning where the Arts began.—Perfection in all intellectual labors must be progressive and based upon experiences. Knowing how difficult it is to find good specimens of the old Masters, even in Europe, which are purchasable, I understand the necessity of securing those which you now offer. A long period may elapse before so many really excellent pictures as your gallery contain, can be brought together among us. There are so few young painters who can afford to make a voyage to Europe for purposes of instruction, that to make your gallery free and permanent, would be rendering them a valuable service by giving them access to good pictures in their own Country. Indeed public Galleries are as essential to the cultivation of a correct taste, and the advancement of knowledge in Art, as public Libraries are to the literary and scientific wants of a people. As we are beyond other nations in all things contributing to physical happiness, the time has come to hope for an enjoyment of those mental luxuries which tend to exalt and perfect the moral and poetic sensibilities."

I am,

Dear Sir,

Very truly your friend

(Signed) MINER K. KELLOGG.

(A distinguished Artist who has resided at Florence many years.)

"WASHINGTON, JULY 23rd 1848.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have considered with some anxiety, your proposal to sell your collection of paintings to the Government of the United States and beg leave to offer the following suggestions.

1st. I do not think it probable that Congress will very readily, be induced to order the purchase unless some well digested plan of a *National* character shall be first adopted, for the preservation and exhibition of the pictures. This plan I think should be the establishment of a "*National Gallery of Art*" attached to, or forming a part of, the Smithsonian Institution, or the "*National Institute*," for the instruction of American Artists and, what would follow as a matter of course, the improvement or refinement of the public taste and judgment on all branches of the fine Arts. To accomplish this I would suggest:—

2nd. That the Trustees of the Smithsonian Institution or the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library, bring forward a measure, in one of the Houses of Congress, asking a grant of five hundred thousand acres of the public Lands, to enable them to establish a National Gallery of Art for purposes above indicated—with the understanding that your collection shall be purchased as a beginning or commencement of this national enterprize.

I am of opinion that a proposition of this sort presented and judiciously sustained would command the favorable opinion of the Country and of Congress."

I am with much respect and esteem,

Very truly Your's

(Signed)

T. BUTLER KING.

GIDEON NYE, JR, ESQ.

(Then Member of Congress and Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs.)

Copy of letter of the Honorable John A. Dix, Member of the Senate of the United States
—dated—“ 14 Bond Street (New York) 21 May, 1850.

DEAR SIR,

“ I cannot forbear to say to you that I have derived the greatest satisfaction from the examination, from time to time during the last year, of your Pictures by the Old Masters.

Regarding your Collection as the most valuable I have seen on this side of the *Atlantic* and as furnishing the most favorable opportunity ever presented of forming a *National Gallery of Art*, which shall do honor to this City and the Country, I earnestly hope the suggestion, which has been made, to found such a Gallery upon your Pictures as a basis, may be carried out; and it will give me sincere pleasure to contribute by every effort in my power to so desirable an object.—

I am,

Dear Sir,

truly Yours,

GIDEON NYE, JR. ESQ.

(Signed)

JOHN A. DIX.

Extract of a letter from a distinguished Artist in Italy dated 22d March, 1852.

“ Please give my kind regards to friend Nye, and say that I remember him with great pleasure as one of the honest and liberal friends of Art. I am well aware of what he has sacrificed for its advancement in America, and the niggardly return for it he received. He is no doubt convinced that in our day America is not to become the home of the Arts or Artists either. How glad I should be to pursue my studies there, surrounded by friends and the liberal Institutions of America; but I have made up my mind that this cannot be and that I must long remain an exile to both, for I cannot give up my profession though I may be beggared by it.”

From a New York Journal of 1849.

“ MR. NYE'S GALLERY OF THE OLD MASTERS.—So rare and precious have become the paintings by what are generically termed “ the old masters,” that the wealth of John Jacob Astor would scarcely suffice to create a gallery in this country furnishing a competent idea of the great masters of Italy in the single period of its highest renown. The few pictures from their hands, of real excellence, still extant, are mostly the property of governments, princes or nobles, who could not be induced for any reasonable consideration to part with them: and scarcely could even another such a violation of the shrines of art as that of Napoleon procure another collection to be compared, in extent and completeness, to the gallery of the Louvre. Such of our artists and citizens as are enabled to visit Europe may, for some years to come, obtain by diligence and careful industry something like an adequate idea of the glory of Italian art in its best days; but to the great majority of Americans this must be for ever denied. Year by year the old pictures are approaching slowly, yet sensibly, the period of their decay; and long before the time arrives when society is relieved from poverty, and intercommunication between all portions of the world is at the command of every citizen who desires it, they will have faded to air and crumbled into dust.

Under the circumstances, therefore, the proprietor of the Lyceum Gallery of the Old Masters deserves to be considered emphatically in the light of a public benefactor for even the partial success with which he has endeavored to supply the great want so keenly felt by all lovers of art in our metropolis. His gallery, if not equal to that of Dresden or the Louvre, is certainly very far in advance of any effort heretofore made to afford the American public any idea of the "old masters." One feature of this establishment, which deserves particular notice and applause, is the real candor of the catalogue, which, so far as we are able to judge, states fairly the claims of every picture, and is entirely devoid of the preposterous mis-statements too frequently indulged in by picture-dealers. So faithful and complete, in fact, is the catalogue, that it leaves little room or necessity for technical criticism; and with a few exceptions, which we shall proceed to point out, it may be consulted with safety. It is true that there are several paintings in the gallery spoken of as undoubted originals, which we should not be willing to endorse as such; nor could we with certainty pronounce them to be copies. It is notorious that even the best masters produced many inferior works, which still retained, here and there, traces of the great genius and excellence which have rendered them immortal. Of this class we in fact regard the greater portion of the pictures in the Lyceum Gallery."

"GALLERY OF THE OLD MASTERS AT THE LYCEUM IN BROADWAY.—It is not very creditable to the taste and liberality of our public, that so fine a collection of original paintings, and celebrated engravings, as those which have been on exhibition for the year past in the Lyceum, have been so little visited. Let what may be said in respect to the authenticity of two or three pictures in the collection, taken as a whole, there has never been so important and really fine exhibition of works of art in this country as this at the Lyceum.

If it contained nothing more than the two pictures—the Martyrdom of St. Lawrence and Lot and his Daughters—the proprietor would be entitled to the thanks of every lover of art in this country for his liberality in bringing hither two of the finest paintings that have ever been exhibited on this side the Atlantic.

The St. Lawrence is not one of those flashy white and red paintings which arrest the eye by their glare and finery, and grow less and less inviting the longer they are gazed at; but, on the contrary, it is so low in tone, and the local color is so dark that at first the canvas seems to be little more than a plain surface, with here and there a discolored spot. But as you look into it, you begin to see figures moving, fires burning, and a clear atmosphere through which you can look into long passages, up high stairs, and over the tops of palatial buildings. The whole canvas becomes instinct with life, thought and sensations; you forget that you are standing in a quiet room in Broadway, and you become a spectator in a scene which occurred centuries ago in a far-off land, when superstition

"Bared his red arm and bade the faggot blaze."

You look through the frame of the canvas into the picture, as though you were looking through a window into another country. This painting, above any other that has ever been brought to the United States, impresses us with the greatness of the Old Masters, and reveals the secret of their enduring fame. There is nothing obtrusive or meretricious about it, and as a work of high art, it deserves to be hung in a gallery by itself. But then it is the work of the Master of the Old Masters, or at least, if not by his hand, it is so close an imitation of his manner, that none but the most experienced eye could detect the difference between it and an original. For our own part, we care not whether it be an original or copy. It is good enough, and those who are better able to judge than ourselves, say they have no doubt of its originality.

There are many other truly fine paintings in the Lyceum Gallery, which we shall notice from time to time, but we never enter it without first turning to the St. Lawrence, nor revert in our thoughts to the collection without first thinking of this great work. As the season has now arrived when strangers are daily pouring into the city from all parts of the country, we would advise our country friends not to omit the opportunity afforded them to visit the finest collection of pictures that has ever been seen in the New World."—*Evening Mirror*.

" Criticisms on Works of Art are seldom just. They usually exhibit a patronizing air, and are distinguished for extravagant praise or indiscriminate censure, either and all of which is against the subject, as well as injurious to Art. Our standard by which to test the truth and perfection of all artistic productions, is their proximity to that most perfect and natural condition which we call Unity; involving and embracing the existence and arrangement of all the principles and details which are necessary to a perfect whole. The opinions of Captain Payne, in the proprietor's circular, as also the poetic effusions of Clericus, tend to create, in the minds of those persons unacquainted with Art, an incorrect idea of the works referred to. Clericus is complimentary, while Captain P. decides upon their originality, and estimates their value merely as a marketable commodity. A true Work of Art will correspond to some truth in nature, varying in character as the perception of the artist is more or less perfect. Thus the grandest display of nature is the sublimest lesson and teacher of the true artist. By tracing her operations he is enabled to form the basis, and combine the elements of his own creations. And inasmuch as the harmonious operations of nature depend on a just and perfect distribution of parts, and a right condition of the whole, so must his work, to be in a degree perfect, correspond to the divine original.

" In the present collection, the " Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence," by Titian, presents a nearer approach to the breadth and general characteristics of nature than any other production. The first impression of this picture is not usually favorable (especially if one be not familiar with the manner of the painter), chiefly from the sudden contrast experienced by the eye, between strong daylight and the profound darkness of the painting, which represents night illuminated by the flambeau and a supernatural star, whose beams of hope throw a mild, soft light on the figure of the martyred saint. After the eye becomes accommodated to the painting, an indescribable sensation of pleasure is felt; it is that which is experienced when we behold a real scene of interest, with tangible objects interspersed. In most other works, however well executed in other respects, we know and feel they are but pictures—we see they are but " painted cloths;" but, in this work, the illusion is so complete as almost to cheat our very senses—the canvass or ground is never thought of. The all-powerful, penetrating light is graduated from the centre of the composition into the remotest recesses. All is low, deep, full and rich, yet nothing black.* The eye passes from figure to figure, while the mind is impressed that the space and the atmosphere are real. This magic-like effect is the result of the most profound knowledge of the laws of light and shade, in art, termed *chiar' oscuro*; and in this department Titian stood without a rival. This truth of effect causes every object in the composition to occupy its true position—nothing is out of place—each part has a specific locality and purpose, which it truly fills; hence, in the *claire-obscur*, all objects are blended into unity. Viewing the design in reference to these qualities, it stands a master production, from a genius of the highest order.

" Color, being an effect of light and shade, it must correspond in truth, and here it partakes of the solemnity of midnight, with the richest combination of local hues. In composition, the figures are grouped with an effect and dignity of action truly in character with the affecting scene. The drawing is firm and decided—every boundary has the clear, sharp outline of nature, and every line has a distinct meaning. In expression, it almost approaches the height which it occupies in *chiar' oscuro*. The same unity which characterizes the effect may be observed in the expressions. Every person seems engaged in connection with the grand ideas of the subject, and even the horses express, in their countenances, a degree of sympathy, and appear sensible of the heart-rending scene which is being enacted. The hand of time has evidently changed the *picture* somewhat, and the detestable trade of *picture-renovating* has begun its work of ruin. Considered as a whole, we have rarely seen a Work of Art with so many real excellencies and so few decided faults."†

* In painting, by a skillful use of colours, any dark recess or cave may be represented, conveying an idea of intervening atmosphere and light with such an intensity of depth, that the blackest pigment, when touched on it, will make a light spot.

† It is difficult to discover in what respect this picture has suffered from time or otherwise.

SOME OF THE EDITORIAL NOTICES OF THE COLLECTION, DURING APRIL, 1849.

From the Tribune.

GALLERIES OF ART.—We have now in this city four very fine Picture Galleries for the recreation, refinement and delight of the public—the “Gallery of the Old Masters,” at the Lyceum Buildings, a splendid and valuable collection, containing many undoubted originals—the Exhibition of the Academy of Design, in the Society Library Buildings—and the American and International Art-Unions, in Broadway. In going the rounds of these collections, the lover of Art will find much to interest and delight him. We shall have something more to say of all of them in a few days.

From the Universalist of April, 1849.

GALLERY OF OLD MASTERS, No. 563 BROADWAY.—“No. 58. The Marriage of St. Catharine, by Ludovico Carracci.” This picture is composed with great skill and judgment. Every portion bears evidence of deliberate study, and the effect of the whole is impressively grand. The prominent characteristics are solemnity of effect and dignity of action: the former being produced by a cool aspect of light, weak and somewhat subdued: the latter, the effect of elevation and repose of character in the figures occupying the scene.

St. Catharine kneels at the feet of the infant Jesus while receiving the ring, and upon her face dwells a spiritual beauty. The mother is seated, holding her infant son with an expression of maternal interest, as if conscious of his exalted natural endowments. The figure on the left of the spectator in the upper section of the picture, is nobly conceived; it is an embodiment of elevated composure, contemplating the ceremony below. The two figures in the lower corner holding a scroll, are equally fine: the action of the farther one is truly graceful and life-like, while the other reclines with appropriate gesture. At the feet of St. Catharine lie a sword and broken wheel, and over all are angels floating through the atmosphere with a grace which cannot be described. The leading one of the group is especially aerial. The light and shade is well managed, uniting great power with the utmost delicacy. Nor is the colouring inferior: the flesh has the peculiar freshness of nature, and in the different figures are introduced a variety of complexions from the fair and delicate to the deepest brown. The work possesses a dignity and sentiment throughout, which places it amongst the finest productions of the school of the Carracci.

“No. 12. Raphael's Amasia, La Fornarina.” This specimen of art possesses such rare beauties as to defy description. In the expression there is a life-like exactness which is indescribable with language. The very soul of the person lingers about the countenance, and it has such a powerful individuality as to impress us almost as reality. Although the features cannot be considered as classic, nor the expression elevated, yet there exists a truth to nature which is irresistible. The relief is strong and the colouring elegant. Nothing can exceed the grace expressed by the right hand resting on the bosom, clasping the light drapery which falls upon her person. The beauty of the left hand is slightly impaired by injudicious cleaning, yet we know of no picture so admirably executed as this production of Raphael.

No. 56. “THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT—by MURILLO.”—The prominent characteristics of this picture are, graceful and life-like action, elevated expression, and lucid silvery colour, with an air of repose, giving to the whole that religious aspect for which this great Spanish Master's works are so highly celebrated. The impression produced by the general effect is extremely pleasing, there being sufficient of literal nature to make it readily comprehended, and hence the great popularity of this painter's works. Unlike those masters who presented nature in a more abstract and idealized form, he addresses us at once: I should say, he attracts us, and, as if by a charm, holds us until the soul is filled with his refining thoughts. Nor is he so natural as to become commonplace and insipid; his interpretations of nature are imbued with a spirituality which finds a response from our purest affections.

The painting illustrates an event in the history of *Christ* which is universally familiar. In the centre of the picture is the mother of Jesus seated on an ass, with her infant on her lap. Her eyes are cast downward, as she tenderly watches each motion of her beloved child. The emotions of a fond mother, contemplating her innocent offspring, are clearly depicted in that beauteous face. Her attention seems wholly absorbed,—nay, her inmost soul appears to hold communion with the very spirit of the child. Her left hand lies open, deferentially, on his lap, and her right arm encircles his waist with maternal fondness. The artist has made the mother an embodiment of confiding simplicity in the care of her guardian angel, while the child casts its eyes upward in the face of the mother with an innocent loveliness.

The Angel leads the way, with one hand pointing onward and the other holding a cord attached to the animal. His eyes dwell upon the objects of his errand, while he wends his way, inspiring a confiding, reverential feeling in Mary and Joseph. The latter follows with staff in hand, while his countenance bespeaks a faithfulness and acquiescence which the occasion would naturally require. Above are seen infant angels of most surpassing beauty. Their airy lightness is elegantly portrayed, and their inexpressible ease is a repetition of the happy quality which characterises each figure on the canvas. Finally, the work should be seen and *studied* to be truly understood :—it is full of meaning, soul, and beauty. *Good pictures are like good people, the more intimate we become with them, the more evident is their intrinsic worth.*

From the Morning Star.

THE LYCEUM GALLERY.—We know of nothing more delightful than stealing away from the glare and glitter, and constant turmoil of Broadway, to spend an hour or two in this spacious gallery, enriched as its walls are with some of the finest pictures that the ruthless hand of Time has spared to us. Among the many fine paintings the visitor's attention is quickly attracted to two noble pictures differing in every particular but in the consummate skill of their execution.

MARTYRDOM OF ST. LAWRENCE.—When one's eyes first fall on this picture, little is discernible but the lurid flames of torches and cressets, which only serve to "render darkness visible;" but soon the sight becomes accustomed to the light, and stretched over the glowing coals we see the convulsed limbs of the heroic martyr, who "consents to death, but conquers agony." It needs no anatomical skill to see that every swelling vein and straining muscle are true to nature. Then we have the muscular forms of the executioners, and the attendant guards, all depicted with strange fidelity. One may gaze for hours on this picture, and every moment some new point will strike the attentive observer, as if the flames were fanned by the night wind, and fell on it at that moment for the first time. This is from the magic pencil of *Titian*.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—Had nothing been left to us of the works of Murillo but this picture, he would have justly been classed as one of the great masters of his divine art. Never was a face painted on which the maternal character was so beautifully depicted. The other characters, eight in number, are painted with that careful study that distinguishes all Murillo's paintings. The guardian angels that escort the holy family, are exquisite creations, and seem to float upon the desert air that fans the placid brow of the Babe of Bethlehem.

LA FORNARINA.—This charming picture is doubtless an original, by Raphael; for if we take it from him, to whom else shall we assign its execution? what other painter ever combined the same graceful drawing, delicious colouring, and at the same time unexaggerated, womanly beauty? The softened fire of the dark-hued eye, that seems to tell a tale of happier days, makes the observer linger long before the beautiful *Amasia*. Nothing can be finer than the finish bestowed by its artist on this picture, but it is seen only in its effects; nowhere are the means perceivable. We shall soon again recur to this fine collection, and endeavor to notice, at greater length, some of its numerous ornaments.

P.S. May 5th 1849.—The proprietor of the Lyceum Gallery had hesitated to publish entire, in the foregoing, the notice of the *Evening Mirror*, (having omitted the part complimentary of himself,) which is republished in the *Literary World* of this day; but the concurrence of opinions so independent and respectable induces him, in his desire to extend an appreciative knowledge of the Collection, to append the entire notice of the *Literary World*, including that of the *Mirror*. In so doing, however, he disclaims all undue pretensions to individual merit, and desires merely to present worthily, and in a form to enlist the countenance of gentlemen more influential than himself, the actual merits and value of the Collection, in the acquisition of which for his country he has the merit, simply, of being the fortunate and willing instrument.

* * "The tribute to Mr. NYE, at the close of the following notice of his fine Gallery of Paintings and Engravings in Broadway, is well deserved. We know of few rarer enjoyments within the present range of New-York resources, than an hour or two of a morning, in the quiet, retired rooms which he has caused to be fitted up in the Lyceum Building. The arrangements are peculiarly convenient; while the paintings, looked at merely in the light of their suggestiveness, from their subjects and the plan of treatment, are a school for the imagination, than which none can be more productive or agreeable.

This is an art which has been somewhat too much neglected among us, [that of extracting from the picturesque, wherever it appears in landscape, books, real life, or paintings, the enjoyment which it is capable of conferring. "The visitors," says the *Evening Mirror*, "at this noble collection of pictures, will be struck with the nice discrimination manifested in the selection of the engravings, of which there is a much larger number than was ever before exhibited in this city. They are arranged with taste and a correct judgment, and among them may be seen specimens of every master, and of every school, from the earliest down to the present period. To the artist, such a collection as this is of immense importance, and to the student of art they are absolutely essential towards acquiring a tolerable degree of knowledge of the literature and tradition of the Fine Arts. The paintings in the lower room offer a rich intellectual treat, and the pleasant manner in which the gallery is fitted up, and the obliging attention of the superintendent, render the gallery one of the pleasantest places in the city for a lounge; and here, while resting in an atmosphere of art, the spectator may at a glance review the great works of those master-minds whose productions have charmed and instructed mankind for centuries. The Gallery of the Lyceum is an honor to the city, and our people should regard with peculiar esteem the gentleman by whose enlightened liberality we are enabled to boast of so pure a source of refined amusement, and so powerful an addition to the attractions of the city."—*Literary World of May*, 5th 1849.

" NEW YORK, 22d August, 1848.

"MR. GIDEON NYE—*Dear Sir*:—In answer to your request to write you my impressions of the picture attributed to Titian, in your catalogue, I freely say, that I was struck from the first with the work as an original Titian, and my frequent examinations of it since have quite confirmed me in this belief. Of its *merits*, it is here unnecessary and impossible to speak. I find *enough* to admire and study in it;—it is with respect to its *originality* that I suppose you wish vouchers, as the fact of the *composition* being Titian's, is, of course, too well known to admit of doubt.

"And I should say there can be no question on this point. The peculiar manner of execution and the *quality* (as a substance) of Titian's works, preclude the idea of its being a copy, to almost any intelligent observer of old pictures; and to those intimately acquainted with Titian's paintings, it is the more impossible, inasmuch as they believe this singular *quality* of his colors never to have been approached by either ancient or modern imitators.

"There are also internal evidences in the work, of the strongest character, which to *me* are satisfactory, but which cannot be set forth here; indeed they would be quite inconclusive, except to those who have studied this master *con amore*.

"In conclusion I am only surprised how this work came *here*, and though an authentic history of the picture could not increase my belief in its originality,* I believe that a definite account of the whole gallery would do a great deal to give them credit with the *public*, who have a feverish suspicion of the 'Old Masters.'

"Very respectfully, yours &c., &c. (Signed) HENRY PETERS GRAY."

Extract from a Letter of WASHINGTON IRVING, ESQ., respecting the "Flight into Egypt" by MURILLO.

"I recollect being generally very well pleased; but the only painting, at this distance of time, which remains strongly impressed on my recollection, is the 'Flight into Egypt.' This I considered an original Murillo, and one in his best manner; and I was the more struck by it from having, during my two residences in Spain, become extremely fond of the works of that master."

* Some months after this letter was written the name of Titian was found by an Art Student inscribed upon the Picture,—a circumstance quite unknown before to the Proprietor; and one that but for the faithfulness of the person in charge, in rubbing the Picture daily, might have remained unknown for a long period after. G. N. Jr.

[FIRST LEAVES OF]

A

COMPANION

TO THE

GALLERY OF PAINTINGS.

BY THE

OLD MASTERS.

BY RICHARD GRANT WHITE.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

"If to eat and drink, and to be warm, were the only passions of our minds, we should all be what the lowest of us all are at this day. The love of the beautiful calls man to fresh exertions, and awakens him to a moral, noble life; and the glory of it is, that as painters imitate, and poets sing, and statuaries carve, and architects rear up the gorgeous trophies of their skill,—and as every thing becomes beautiful, and orderly, and magnificent,—the activity of the mind rises to still greater and better objects. The principles of justice are sought out; the powers of the ruler and the rights of the subject are fixed; man advances to the enjoyment of rational liberty, and to the establishment of those great moral laws which God has written in our hearts, to regulate the destinies of the world."—*Sidney Smith*.

PREFACE.

THIS volume is called a Companion to the Gallery of which it treats, and it pretends to be nothing more.

The writer disclaims entirely the intent of setting it forth as an unerring guide either to the authenticity or the merits of the Pictures. With regard to the latter point he has allowed himself to speak with the confidence allowable, perhaps, in one who, prompted by an enthusiastic love of Art, has given it much earnest thought, and who has that acquaintance with the works under consideration which can be gained only by repeated and careful examination; but as to the former, their originality, he is too conscious of the difficulty of the subject and knows too well the peculiar qualifications and opportunities of study necessary for the attainment of certain knowledge upon it, to offer his own opinions as anything more than timid conjectures.

The authenticity of any painting whose history is not fully known but which is attributed to a celebrated artist—and in this category may be included a large number, perhaps more than half of the great and famous works in European Galleries—is determined by various means*; among them the nature of the subject, the style of composition, the predominant feeling, the treatment of form, the

* These points will be elucidated in subsequent notes and in quotations from the highest authorities in æsthetic and technical criticism.

tone, the color and the use of accessories, are important. Upon most of these points one who has given attention to the higher branches of criticism and whose sensuous perceptions are acute by natural endowment and by use, can speak with a feeling of confidence, if he be familiar with the best engravings of the Master, even if he have not seen any of his works. But these points, although within the higher and æsthetic range of criticism, are evidently the least reliable when nicety of discrimination is required to determine the authenticity of a painting. For in a copy, the subject, the composition and the accessories will of necessity be the Master's own, while the feeling, the treatment of form, the tone and the color of the original will be followed with an exactness limited only by the copyist's power of comprehension and imitation.† It will however be obvious to every one who considers the subject that no copyist, whatever his talent, can seize and embody all the sentiment of a great Master's work, or even re-produce his effects of color. It is even impossible for an artist to repeat his own production exactly.§ Of this there are many well known proofs.||

There are however certain other and unmistakeable peculiarities belonging to each artist which become well known to every capable *connoisseur*. These peculiarities are technical or mechanical, and being exhibited entirely in the execution, the manipulation of the artist, have little or nothing to do with the merit of his works. They are, so to speak, the hand-writing of the painter, as easily recognized by one familiar with them as the manuscript of an author by one of his friends, and as certain guides in determining the authenticity of a work pretending to be his; or even more unerring, for every artist has peculiarities of coloring ¶ as much and as exclusively his own as his peculiarities of touch. The color too of each artist is affected peculiarly and differently by the hand of Time; and the relative changes which Pictures undergo in this regard are among the surest guides to the unerring decision of the *connoisseur*. This, as an indication of originality, is more particularly alluded to in the remarks upon the "Nativity" of FRA BARTOLOMEO.

It is evident to all that none are competent to speak upon these points save those who have had opportunities of studying closely the scattered works of the Great Masters of the various schools and comparing them carefully with each other. Such persons, fortunately for the author's purpose, were at hand to furnish him with their decisions upon the originality of the principal Pictures in this Collection. He alludes to those distinguished artists Mr. GRAY, Mr. HUNTINGTON and Mr. KELLOGG, whose opportunities for study abroad are as well known as their talents, and who have kindly offered either to the Proprietor of the Gallery or to the writer their valuable opinions upon different Pictures. He wishes however to acknowledge particularly his obligations in this regard to Capt. WILLIAM PAYNE, late of H. B. M's. Royal Engineers, who is an artist as well as a *connoisseur*, and whose tastes have led him to devote years to the study of the works of the Great Masters, for which he has had unusual facilities both on the Continent of Europe and in England. From such authorities, which are all in favor of the authenticity of the principal paintings, there is, in this country at least, no appeal. Any assertions here as to the originality of a Picture are based entirely upon the decisions of one or more of these gentlemen; but for opinions and conjectures on this subject, founded on such general internal evidence as was at first alluded to, or upon peculiarities which are particularly pointed out, as well as for any views of Art or judgment of the Pictures as mere works of Art, the author alone is responsible.*

In preparing the work the object in view has been to furnish visitors to the Gallery with such information about the Painters as curiosity would prompt them to seek, and such opinions upon the Pictures as might at least suggest thought if they did not guide it. For this purpose all sources of information within reach have been used with freedom; sometimes with particular acknowledgment, but oftener without. The biographical and critical notices† of the several Painters have been made rather fuller than is usual in similar works abroad, because of the more recently awakened attention of the public of this country to the higher branches of the Arts. It is hoped that the well-read student of Art will find this an all sufficient excuse for a particularity which else might seem both trite and superfluous.

If the book be fortunate enough to arouse a more general attention to the merits of this valuable and interesting Collection, or to point out to its visitors, as with the finger of an old friend, beauties in the Paintings which else might have escaped their stranger eyes, or to suggest an idea which shall lead to invigorating thought or soothing reverie upon Art, it will fully accomplish the intent and gratify the hopes of the Author.

* It may not be improper to state here that the Proprietor of the Collection is so well assured of the authenticity of the Works attributed to the various Great Masters in the Catalogue that he has publicly offered to forfeit any picture whose originality can be impeached on competent testimony.

† These are here omitted as the present compilation is addressed only to the "well-read" in the characteristics of the Masters.

G. N. Jr.

‡ Precisely; but he who can grasp another's thought and express it must be his superior.

§ As Mr. Ruskin truly says:—"the imagination never repeats itself."

|| An original mind spontaneously disdains to mechanically repeat its work. G. N. Jr.

¶ As a substance of peculiar inherent and retentive qualities as well as in its use.

G. N. Jr.

ITALIAN SCHOOLS.

The chief of the Italian Schools, the Florentine, the Roman, the Venetian and the Bolognese, are, considering the size of the Collection, well represented here ; sufficiently so to enable the student to obtain a very clear idea of their different characteristics. We commence with the picture earliest in date and most remote in style.

FRA BARTOLOMEO.

THE NATIVITY.

A picture of mingled sweetness and power, and in the master's most pure and elevated style of conception.

The infant CHRIST lies in the foreground, and the Virgin Mother kneels with hands crossed upon her bosom, gazing with mingled love and adoration upon him who is at once her Saviour and her son. JOSEPH sits upon the ground near her, with hands crossed over his knee, absorbed in wondering, reverential contemplation. In the landscape background, the cattle, displaced from their manger, look in upon its unwonted occupants. A star, painted with the somewhat puerile literalness which generally marks the treatment of such accessories by the older Masters, sheds its ray directly upon the stable, and close by, through the broken clouds, a company of angels is seen. It appears to have been the object of the artist to get into his picture all the incidents mentioned by the Evangelists as attending the Nativity ; and in this he but followed the custom of his time, which was to consult, in such details, the expectations of the devout spectator rather than physical probability or good keeping. The management of this portion of the picture is an important auxiliary evidence of its antiquity and authenticity.

In looking at this painting, we can feel the full force of LAMB's remark, that " the race of Virgin MARY painters is extinct." Any artist of talent can paint a beautiful woman with a child in her arms, and such a picture must always give a high and pure pleasure to the beholder ; but let the woman be ever so beautiful, nay, let her face be ever so pure and lovely in expression, if it be nothing more, it is not an embodiment of our idea of the Virgin MARY. In her, we look for a sentiment which, for want of another name, we call divine. The joy in her face must be something more, though it can not be purer, than a mother's. She not only rejoiced " that a man was born into the world "—to few women is denied that happiness—but she knew that he had no earthly father, and one from Heaven had assured her that he was her Saviour, the long-looked-for Messiah, and she felt indeed " blessed among women." Her maternal joy was tempered and elevated with awe ; and she humbled herself before the babe which she had pressed to her bosom with more than even a mother's tenderness.

Such a Virgin has FRA BARTOLOMEO given us here. Look at her face, and at first call it hard, if you will. Think, and say that it is formal and stiff, but still look at it, and soon you will forget that it is not so plump, dimpled and rosy as the face you last admired in the street, or you will remember the difference only to feel the almost measureless superiority, in sentiment and expression, of the one before you. Mark its holy elevation, its sweet purity, its instinctive dignity, its love, its pride, humility. It is difficult to say whether adoration or affection most fill the soul which animates that countenance. A glowing halo of the loftiest and sweetest sentiment surrounds that sainted head, and thence diffuses itself throughout the picture, which is full of tender seriousness, tranquillity, and a divine purity.

The composition, though of cabinet size, is large and grand in style. The figures have much ease and a clear, bold outline. The limbs were evidently drawn first, and the drapery added afterward, which, we are informed by LANZI, was FRA BARTOLOMEO's manner of working. The color has great strength and harmony, and the tone of the whole picture is luminous, though subdued. The hands of the Virgin are remarkable as being of the same form and expression as those found in many of RAFFAEL's women, those in his early works particularly ; and the close observer will notice that they are painted with long, decided strokes of the brush, which can be traced almost from the wrist to the tips of the fingers. Every line in the picture shows clear intent and consciousness of power.

It is a noble work, and valuable not only for its intrinsic merits, but as an admirable specimen of the art at the time when it was just casting off the harsh constraints of monkish conventionalities, but had not yet lost that power of expressing the sentiment of divinity in the human form which was its great and almost its only glory in the Middle Ages, and which too soon gave place to an expression of sensuous emotion and mere flesh and blood beauty.

About the authenticity of this picture there is no doubt in the minds of the most competent judges, even were its history not well known. All the Artist's characteristics, pointed out by the eminent critics quoted above, are well marked here. The "calm seriousness," the "tender and deeply religious feeling," have been already sufficiently indicated. The color is harmonious, soft and transparent, and disposed in fine masses: but, as has been recently remarked by a distinguished artist who has carefully studied the works of the Master at Florence, the usual effect of time upon some of his tints—as, for instance, the change of the blue in the mantle to green—is very apparent in portions of the picture. This affords another strong additional proof of its authenticity. There is hardly any internal evidence of the originality of a picture more reliable than the identity of changes in its colors with those which have taken place in others known to be by the same Master; for the palette of the artist and the hand of Time are both equally and indispensably necessary to their production. The peculiarity alluded to by ALGAROTTI, *i. e.*, that FRA BARTOLOMEO's figures are "little elevated above the standard of ordinary men and somewhat vulgar,"—by which is simply meant that they have not that ideality of form which is found in RAFFAEL,—is also strongly exemplified in the JOSEPH and the child in this picture: though the head of the former is by no means wanting in solemnity of expression. The picture is on a stout panel, and in good preservation.

RAFFAEL.

PORTRAIT OF LA FORNARINA.

We know little more of the subject of this painting than that she is said to have been the daughter of a baker, and that she was the mistress of RAFFAEL, who loved her devotedly till his death, refusing for her sake the hand of the niece of his friend, Cardinal BIBIENA, who continually solicited the princely Painter's alliance with his house.* But is not this enough to know—that she was beloved of RAFFAEL? Had there been but one portrait of this woman, and had that remained undiscovered until now, what crowds would flock to gaze reverentially upon the image of her who was shrined in RAFFAEL's heart!—and all would doubtless expect to see in her the soul of a Saint beaming from the face of a VENUS. What would they find? Nothing which might not have been looked for in any baker's daughter who had no artist lover. There is a certain self-conscious worth in the mien and a fire in the eye: the face is one of character, and the forms are fine; but, as KUGLER says, there is also in the countenance "an expression of coarseness and common life," though no vulgarity, and we are compelled to admit that she whom RAFFAEL tenderly loved while living, and honored when dying, was neither Saint nor Goddess, but only a simple, unaffected, and, we may be sure, a loving and a trusting Woman. Cannot her sex from this learn something of the way in which great hearts are won?

This picture has many points which attest the master hand. There is a vividness of expression, and a look of life in the face, which give the figure a presence like that of reality. The flesh is delicate, and the local tints are preserved with wonderful power. This is seen particularly in the right arm, which is painted in admirable *chiar'oscuro*: none but a master could have made the limb retire so decidedly, and yet with such natural ease. The areolæ of the bosom are colored with unequalled truth, sweetness and delicacy.

The figure is seated, uncovered to the waist, and the right hand draws a light drapery to the bust. A dark, sombre colored shawl is twisted round the head and is confined with a jewel. Shrubbery forms the back-ground. Upon a blue armlet on the left arm appears the name "RAPHAEL URBINAS." This corresponds exactly with the description given of the portrait in the BARBERINI Palace, and an examination of the engraving made from that picture will show that this corresponds with it in all points, save a few which are of that trivial nature in which painters purposely varied when making repetitions of a favorite and successful subject. Let any critically disposed observer examine the engraving§ from the former before condemning this for want of ideal beauty, and for faults in the bust and the left hand; the engraving shows the same coarseness in the first regard, the same meanness in the second, and the same clumsy, sausage-like appearance in the last. The variations appear in the jewel in the hair, the absence of a ring upon the *second* joint of the fourth finger of the left hand, and in the position of the drapery in the right hand.† In the picture before

§ There were in the Gallery Engravings of two repetitions of the same Portrait both differing from this Picture.

G. N. Jr.

* It is supposed by many that a prospective Cardinal's Hat, which he had some reason to look for, was the chief cause of RAFFAEL's rejection of the niece of BIBIENA; but as he, though not wishing to offend the Cardinal, finally consented to betroth himself to her only after four years' solicitation, when he had no hope of the purple, and after this betrothment still put off the marriage, I prefer to adopt the supposition most honorable to his purity of sentiment and disinterested constancy of affection.

† May not this plain gold ring, half on this finger, have been placed there by RAFFAEL as a quiet though fanciful intimation that he considered the wearer as in some sort his wife, though she was not so legally.

us this hand is all exposed, while in the engraving it is partly hidden by the drapery. These points are such as would be scrupulously followed by a copyist who wished to make his work pass for the original; while they are such as would be chosen for variation by the designer in making or finishing a repetition of his own work.

We know that it was RAFFAEL's habit, and one forced upon him by necessity, to have much of the work upon his pictures done by his favored pupils, while the design and the finishing fell to his own hand. KUGLER says, in noticing this portrait in the BARBERINI Palace, that "there are some repetitions of it in Roman Galleries." There can be no doubt that this is one of the best, and that it bears the careful touches of the Great Master himself. The color is somewhat better than is usual with him, but not better than is found in all his portraits, as has been before remarked.

The picture is upon a heavy panel, and is from the collection of the late Lord BERWICK. Its value may be estimated from Mrs. JAMIESON's remark: "To possess one RAFFAEL is to go crowned and crested among collectors."

LUCCA PENNI.

A PORTRAIT OF A PERSON OF RANK.*

He sits in an attitude of much ease and naturalness at a table beneath a portico supported by Corinthian columns. His mien is of great dignity. He appears to be dictating to his Secretary an answer to a letter which he holds in his hand. Behind him is another attendant. He wears an ermine-trimmed mantle, and upon his head one of those caps seen frequently in portraits of persons of consequence of that time, and in one portrait of RAFFAEL by himself. In the distance is a low-toned but warm and sunny landscape, which is painted with a genial feeling for nature.

This picture is admirable for the strong character, and the repose and conscious power which are shewn in the principal figure. The hands are admirably painted, and disposed with great ease; there is an expression of strength, an air of authority in their careless confidence. The tone of the picture is so low, and the local tints are so dark, that many might pass it by unnoticed, but it will well repay careful study. The head of the attendant who stands behind is full of life, and painted in fine *chiaroscuro*.

SCHOOL OF RAFFAEL.

VIRGIN INFANT CHRIST AND ST. JOHN.

The Holy Child sits in the Mother's lap, and leans forward to caress ST. JOHN.

This picture has no remarkable merit, but is an interesting specimen of the school of RAFFAEL. In the head of the Virgin the form and expression very pure, and the face of the young CHRIST is full of simplicity and sweetness. The disposition of color in the drapery is fine, and very characteristic of the School.

GERARD HONTHORST.

ST. JEROME READING THE SCRIPTURES BY CANDLE-LIGHT.

The Saint stands at a table supporting a huge folio with his left hand: on his right are a skull and an hour glass; a crucifix in front hides the candle, which alone lights the cell.

This is an excellent picture and a very fine specimen of the master. Not only is the peculiar effect of light given with all the power of GERARDO's pencil, but the head and figure of the Saint are full of appropriate sentiment. Humility, devotion and absorbed attention are well expressed in the face, the attitude, and the position of the hand upon the emaciated breast. The eye is bleared with age and nightly vigil, and the whole person wasted with fasting and penance. The anatomy of the shoulder and adjacent parts is very fine.

LUDOVICO CARACCI.

THE MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHARINE.

This person, a lady of ALEXANDRIA, was one of the legendary saints and martyrs of the dark ages. She was condemned to torture upon the wheel, but the instrument, according to the story, was broken by supernatural power, and she was borne off by angels. She was said to have mystically espoused our Saviour in a vision, and in consequence made a vow of celibacy, deeming herself the bride of Heaven. She is always represented with a broken wheel, to distinguish her from the ST. CATHARINE of Siena, who had similar espousals.

* This fine specimen of portraiture has been remarked upon several pages back; but I may still note here a further description of it, extracted from a former catalogue. "Over the portal of the edifice is a Latin inscription, partly hidden by the 'Raphael' cap already mentioned, but the following letters are distinctly seen: NOSCE OPORTV EM. The letter held in the hand of the principal person bears a superscription which is indistinct, the letters at the top appear to be HONORABLE DEVR and on the 2d line FERENZA."
G. N. Jr.

In this picture the Virgin sits upon a sort of throne approached by steps, with the infant Christ upon her knee. ST. CATHARINE kneels, and the child places a massive ring upon the forefinger of her right hand. JOSEPH stands behind the Virgin, and in front sit two youthful Saints, holding a scroll; one of them speaks or reads from it with animated gestures, as if publishing the marriage aloud. The Saint wears a triple-jewelled crown, and at her feet lie the broken wheel, a sword and a triple cross. Above, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and accompanied by a troop of cherubs, descends from clouds illumined by glory. In the back ground three figures stand, one in the attitude of listening; another kneeling, with clasped hands, blesses the union. These are ST. ELIZABETH, ST. MARY MAGDALENE, and two other saints.

The composition is admirable, full of dignity and ease, and the color fine. The Virgin's face expresses interest in the scene and sweetness of character; and in the Saint's we see modesty, devotion and a chastened joy. The infant CHRIST has a truly child-like expression, and is in an attitude of great natural grace. The drapery is ample and dignified, as is always the case with this Master. Perhaps the most beautiful figures in the picture are the cherubs which hover over the scene. They have a charming ease, and are painted with a delicate and sweet pencil. The close observer will notice that the right hand of the Saint is somewhat larger than the left. This seems to mark the picture as a late production of the Master, if we may rely upon LANZI, who tells us that he made similar mistakes in other pictures painted late in life, when his style was "less studied, but still exemplary and masterly."*

The frame of this very large picture, is of massive carved oak, richly gilded; the carved figures representing the history of the Passion of our Saviour. It is without doubt, the finest specimen of its kind, in this country, and one of the finest in the world.

GUIDO RENI.

AN ECCE HOMO.—"BEHOLD THE MAN."

This term is applied to the solitary figure or head of the Saviour crowned with thorns.

"Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And PILATE said unto them, 'Behold the Man!' St. John. XIX. 5."

This is a sketch of rather colossal size, and in the master's last manner. The expression is one of great suffering, but is too entirely physical in its nature. This, however, is apt to be the case in the treatment of the subject, save by the greatest artists. Though the picture is, apparently, but a finished sketch, the face is finely modelled.

GUERCINO.

THE VIRGIN WITH THE INFANT CHRIST.

The imitation of the style of CARAVAGGIO is very evident in the strongly contrasted light and shade of this picture. In the Virgin it is carried to a disagreeable excess; though the shadows in her face seem to have sunken more than those in the rest of the picture—Her hands are very good. The Child is fine in all respects; the position being very graceful and easy, and the expression of intellect in the head and face remarkable.

DOMENICHINO ZAMPIERI.

A LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES.

The scene is by the side of an inlet by the sea-shore. A fisherman offers fish to a gentleman and lady, who, with a child and attendant, are in the costume of the time. Near the shore is a boat, in which are a woman and two men, one of whom pushes the boat toward the land with a pole,—this figure is full of spirited action; another takes fish from the boat. On the opposite side of the inlet two fishermen drag a net to land. In the distance are mountains and the sea. The composition is fine, the color clear and lively, and the whole effect of the picture very pleasing. The figure painter is, however, manifest in the treatment. It will be found, if the picture be inspected at a proper distance to obtain the intended effect of the figures, the effect of the landscape is lost, and *vice versa*; the figures, too, have evidently received most of the artist's care,—although the light upon the distant mountains is very fine.

* The following sonnet which appeared in the *Literary World* is so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of this fine picture that its insertion here cannot but be welcome to the reader.

THE MARRIAGE OF ST. CATHERINE.

CAROL.

Pure spouse of heaven! on thy blanched, thought-worn brow,
Methinks I read a future dark that hangs
His clouds about thee, toils and bitter pangs,
And last the wheel's slow agony; but now,
Even while I gaze, strange joy upon thee sits;
In that still look the steadfastness of faith,
On that chaste cheek a love that conquers death;
Meek courage, and the calm heart which befits
The wedded one of Christ. Around thee stand
Forms such as earth beholds not, yet they bless
E'er the hour of suffering holiness:
Thy Lord, clasping in His thy troth-pledged hand,
Mary, and Magdalen with unheard sighs,
And cherubs, gazing down with soft, full eyes.

CLERICS

TITIAN.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. LAWRENCE.

This saint was put to death, August 10, A.D. 258, by being burned over a slow fire. In this picture the torture is inflicted in the night, in an open court at the foot of a noble flight of stairs which leads to the colonnade portico of a large building. The only light shed upon the scene comes from the fire, two torches, and a supernatural ray which pierces a dark cloud over head.

In the centre of the foreground the Saint is seen extended upon a frame of iron, which is placed over a bed of flaming coals. He lies almost at full length and with his feet toward the spectator; a position which taxes to the extreme the Artist's powers of fore-shortening. His face is placid and serene: his agony being expressed only by the contortions of the body. He is held down with an instrument not unlike a hay-fork by an attendant on the right of the spectator. Just behind, and not so actively engaged in the business of the scene, are two other attendants,—one stooping,—and four soldiers with two horses. On the left, one attendant kneels to arrange the fire, another brings an armful of wood to supply it, while a third grasps the Martyr by the shoulder. A statue, on the base of the pedestal on which the Artist has placed his name, stands on the extreme of this side of the picture.

In the back ground two figures descend the steps of the large building before mentioned, another reclines toward the nearer edge of the flight, and a fourth leans from the columns and holds a torch in one hand. Still further back is a building of some size with arched windows, seen to be lighted within, in the balcony of one of which two persons appear.

This picture is in the grandest style of the Great Artist whose name it bears, and displays more of the sublime and terrible than *TITIAN's* reputation would lead the world to look for in his pictures. Those who have heard and read a little about painting, on seeing *TITIAN's* name in the catalogue, expect bright, glowing flesh, and clear, brilliant color every where; they look and find a dark canvass from which a few limbs and heads stand out in seeming confusion, and, it is not unlikely, pass it by without examination, as unworthy further notice. To such an observer, if such deserve the name of observers, the statement above of the points of the picture must be a revelation of things unknown; but unknown only because unsought. Let all who look at this painting be assured that until they have clearly made out every figure and line just enumerated, they are entirely unfit, not only to utter, but to have an opinion about it. They literally have no opinion; they can have none, for they have not seen that upon which only an opinion can be formed.

To see this picture properly let the spectator stand on the opposite side of the room and somewhat to his right of it; let him remember that he is looking upon a night scene, and let him peer into the darkness of the canvass as he would into the darkness of the night if he were striving to observe closely persons whose movements, hardly visible by a fitful light, awakened his interest and curiosity. Then in the picture as in the night will the obscurity become clear, although it is yet darkness; what was at first confused will become distinct; figures will appear, at first dimly, but with gradually increasing distinctness, until finally the whole space, which will hardly seem longer a canvass, is alive with men engaged in a fearful deed, each one absorbed and impressed by the business of the scene, and the very line of the architecture of the back ground will appear to have an expression in keeping with the event which is taking place.

Those who observe the picture closely will be struck with the tone and texture of the flesh, the remarkable effects of light, and, above all, the perfect keeping of the whole composition.—The flesh tints are dark, and to the superficial eye will seem unnaturally so ; but it should be constantly kept in mind that the action is in the night time, and that small portions, projecting points only, of the figures are touched by the direct rays of the little light which is shed upon the scene. It will be found that the flesh, with all its dark hue, is no where dingy, and that the local tint is preserved with wonderful truth, however deep the shadow thrown upon it ; the dark hue, too, will in a great measure disappear as the eye rests upon the picture and becomes accustomed to the tone in which it is painted ; and the figures, after the spectator has attentively considered them and passed as it were into the atmosphere which surrounds them, will seem to be actual creatures of flesh and blood. The light upon the principal figure and those immediately around, comes from two sources, above and below ; that from above becoming generally diffused before it touches the bodies, that from below striking sharply upon those surfaces directly exposed to it. This difficult effect is admirably managed ; it is most observable in the lower limbs of the Saint, and in the kneeling attendant.

The sentiment of the subject is preserved in the minutest details. Too frequently in the works of the Old Painters, even the greatest, some statling incongruity mars enjoyment which would otherwise be perfect. But here there is no such fault ; all is solemn, awful. Horror is made beautiful by being raised to the Sublime. The mere physical conditions of the subject are lost sight of, they become insignificant ; the Martyr is lifted above the earth and we are taken with him ; the very attendants seem ministrants at solemn sacrifice rather than executioners of fiendish torture. The expression of the work in all its parts is lofty ; even the very figures which descend the stairs are noble in mien and movement. The drawing is in general fine, as was the case with the works of TITIAN's matured manner.

As to the originality of this picture, it is hardly necessary to speak, for the duly qualified observer will with difficulty find ground of doubt ; and others would scarcely believe that a picture by TITIAN could be here, though he himself rose from the grave to assure them of the fact. Those who doubt would be well answered in the words of Mr. KRAVL, the Superintendent in 1781, of the Elector's Gallery at Dusseldorf. The Elector was asked that students might copy pictures in the Gallery. He refused on the ground that copies would be sold afterwards for originals, and thus, by multiplying works, depreciate the value of the collection.—Mr. KRAVL assured the Elector that "those who could make such copies were not persons who spent their time in copying at all, but made originals of their own invention." The force of the remark was acknowledged and the Gallery was thrown open. It is only necessary to examine this picture carefully to see that the man who could paint such an one at all, need not copy and would not, especially on so large a scale as this, and the only reasonable ground left for the septic is that it is by some of TITIAN's assistants and was finished by himself. This supposition would not in the least diminish the claims of the picture to originality, for in this way were painted some of the best known works of RUBENS and TITIAN, and particularly of RAFFAEL ; but unfortunately for this theory the whole of the picture is evidently from one hand, the touch being manifestly the same throughout.

The first painting of this subject by TITIAN is known to have been made for PHILIP II of Spain ; and it is also known that it was repeated by him, as was frequently the case with a successful picture by a great master. One repetition is in the church of the Crutched Friars in Venice. It is remarkable that this picture—the one at Venice,—is in some respects unlike that painted for the King of Spain, and that the one before us is also in some respects *unlike either**. Now it is evident that a copyist would have imitated exactly the one of these from which he painted, whether he wished to pass off his work as the original or merely to furnish a fac-simile of it. But the present picture is materially and deliberately different from either the first or the second above mentioned, and therefore cannot be admitted as a copy ; and when we take into consideration the fact that the Great Painters when called upon to repeat a successful subject, always did so with a variation, we have in the very differences between this picture and the others a strong evidence of its authenticity.

But there is in the touch and handling of the picture the strongest proof of all which can be offered as to its originality to artists and such critics as have studied closely the manner of the master. In this respect Mr. GRAY, who has probably studied the works of TITIAN as much as any other living artist, gives an opinion which is conclusive. It may be here remarked that TITIAN's handling, his use of the brush and his laying on of color is admitted on all hands to be more inimitable than that of any other master ; and yet Mr. GRAY, says "an authentic history of the picture could not increase my belief in its originality." Whoever wishes to see this master-work, and see it well, to study it in such a manner as to become thoroughly acquainted with its power and beauty, should select the morning of a day when the Sun is not obscured.

* The difference can be seen by reference to the Engravings in charge of the Keeper of the Gallery, and to the 2d Edition of the Catalogue.

ROTHENHAMER.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

This little picture is full of spirit and action. The Virgin and Child sit upon the mule which is led by one angel, while another hovers in the air, and JOSEPH on foot keeps by the side of his wife. Haste and apprehension are well expressed by all the figures. The angels are evidently urging the mule to the extreme of speed consistent with the comfort of the Mother and Child, and in the faces of MARY and JOSEPH a vague terror predominates. The forms are well modelled and distinctly made out, and the color is laid on in clear, transparent masses.—Although the picture is small and highly finished, there is nothing petty about it; the style is on the contrary rather broad and free. It is painted on copper.

VENETIAN SCHOOL.

THE REPOSE IN EGYPT.

Is not so interesting or so well painted as the previous picture. The color is brilliant and disposed in fine masses but is not so transparent as that of No. 20. The drawing too is neither so good nor so decisive; the artist seeming to have doubted his powers in this respect, and with some reason. Its chief interest is as a study of color. This picture is upon a very thick and heavy slate.

FLEMISH SCHOOL.

The Gallery is particularly rich in specimens of this School, so admired for its fine color and truth to Nature. There are one or two specimens of nearly every one of the most distinguished Masters of the School, and every specimen is good, while some are of superior excellence. The works of the master-mind of the School first claim our attention.

RUBENS.

THE RESURRECTION.

The artist has given us here a figure full of life and power. Conqueror is written in every line upon the canvass. We confess that there is more of the Human than the Divine in the countenance; it is rather the risen and exulting Son of Man than the sacred and serenely omnipotent Son of God whom we have before us; but it is the Human in its loftiest manifestation, it is exultation, without malice, of good over evil.

The risen Saviour sits upon a heavy stone slab, supposed to be the cover of the sepulchre, in an attitude of striking ease and grace. His left hand grasps a rod, and the right falls by his side. The arms, which are models of manly limbs, have an expression of might without excessive muscularity, which it is difficult to convey by words; and indeed the whole figure is instinct with what has been well designated as "the fullness of a new-risen life." The left foot treads upon a serpent and a skull, the emblems of Sin and Death, and close by rise the now "ineffectual fires" of Hell. An Angel in a floating crimson drapery removes the winding sheet, in which office he is assisted by a cherub having a palm leaf in one hand. Behind are two other cherubs bearing laurel wreaths of victory.

This picture is in the Master's best style, of which it may be considered a very fine specimen. The color is remarkable for its truth, clearness and strength, and the composition has all the dramatic intensity of which the subject is susceptible, and without which RUBENS could hardly treat an idea of much interest. That which RAFFAEL would have clothed with the undisturbed serenity of conscious self-existence, RUBENS has endowed with the earthlier, but still pure and majestic expression of triumphant exultation. What in one would have won a reverential admiration nearly akin to worship, in the other arouses a feeling which is almost human sympathy.*

The originality of this picture is undoubted, and it is supposed, with much reason, to be the one known to have been painted for the family of Cockx, of Antwerp, and which has for some time been lost sight of by the catalogue makers. The figures are of a little more than full life size.

The following extract from a notice of this picture appended to the republished Essays upon Art issued from this Gallery, some time since, may be interesting to the reader curious upon the point of originality.

* From the same felicitous pen which wrote the sonnet on the *Marriage of St. Catharine*, we take the following, which was written after seeing this admirable picture.

THE RESURRECTION

RUBENS

The CHRIST is risen! lo! upon our sight
Breaks the full vision of the Easter morn.
Which greeted a glad world, that day twice born.
A bodied life He moves, a breathing might.
As if, all envious of its short delay,
The swelling tide of His returning soul,
Divine, Omnipotent o'er Time's control,
Rushed with one bound into th' enthralled clay.
Off from His shoulders falls the winding-sheet
Midst waiting angels, and the conscious tomb
Yawns with wide-opened gates; beneath His feet
Writhes the foul serpent, and death's face of doom.
The darkness shrinks, and an unearthly sun
Flames from the forehead of the Risen One.

CLERICUS.

[From Smith's Catalogue of Flemish Painters.]

“CHRIST TRIUMPHANT OVER SIN AND THE GRAVE.

“The Saviour is seated on the tomb, holding the staff of a banner in his left hand; a white mantle is round his loins, which an Angel, who stands by his side with one knee on the tomb, holds with both hands; on the opposite side are two Angels. This picture possesses great effect, from the opposition of the white mantle held behind the Saviour and an overcast sky, indicating thunder and lightning.

Now in the Palazzo Pitti, at Florence, 5 feet 4 inches by 4 feet 3, on canvas.”

“This Picture at Florence seems to be a repetition of the same composition in this Gallery, (No. 82.) which is considerably larger, being 7 feet 3 inches by 5 feet 10 inches.

“It is believed to be the one described in Smith's Catalogue as follows:—

“CHRIST TRIUMPHANT OVER SIN, DEATH, AND THE GRAVE.—The Saviour, attended by Angels, is represented sitting on the tomb, treading Sin and Death under his feet. Engraved by EYNDHOUT. This picture was painted to adorn the tomb of the family of Cockx, in the Church of St. Walburge; but it has long since disappeared from its depository.” (No size given.)

“In a subsequent part of his work, Mr. Smith conjectures that a similar composition of the same subject, said to be by *Rubens*, of which he found record as in the Collection of Count Domburg, at the Hague, in 1745, is the picture missing from the tomb in St. Walburge; but this conjecture seems clearly erroneous, since we find in the *Life of Rubens*, by Dr. Michel, written and published at Brussels in 1771, that the picture alluded to was *then* existing in St. Walburge, and which he described as follows:—

“On trouve encore dans cette dite Eglise une autre piece de RUBENS a la gauche du grand chœur, elle fait l'Epithaphe de la famille de Cockx, et represente le Christ apres sa resurrection, assis sur son tambour, de son pied la mort (simbole du peche originel) par sa penible passion, sa mort et sa glorieuse resurrection: cette piece s'étant ecaillée en divers endroits, est presentement retablée par une bonne main. Son estampe est burinée par REM. EYNDHOUT, sans titre, elle n'est pas des plus belles, mais rare. Haut 7 pou 8 lig. sur 9 pou de larg.”

THE HOLY FAMILY, WITH ST. JOHN AND ST. ELIZABETH.

This picture is in RUBENS' earlier manner, but is still possessed of many of his fine traits of color and handling.

The treatment of the subject is quite simple, even homely; and the spectator will by contrast have RAFFAEL's ideal conceptions of the Virgin and her Holy Child brought vividly before his mind's eye. The Mother here is a hearty, robust Flemish country woman, clothed in a coarse, red stuff gown, and sits with her child upon her bosom, having no expression but that of good humor and maternal satisfaction. The Child, plump and happy, and nothing more, caresses his mother's chin. ST. JOHN, standing in front, looks up in his face; and behind is JOSEPH, who holds out his hand to the lamb which accompanies the former. ELIZABETH, whose head is full of character and expression, leans upon the top of the cradle contemplating the group with honest satisfaction.

The composition is very expressive of rustic simplicity and content, and is instinct with the charm of health and unsophisticated nature. The color seems as fresh and clear as if it were put on a year ago.

VANDYKE.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

A composition of many figures, and in its splendor strongly contrasted with the homeliness of the scene as it is usually painted.

The Mother, clothed in an ample crimson robe, sits, holding the youthful Saviour upon her knees. Behind stands JOSEPH, and before her kneels an aged King, gorgeously habited, who offers to the Child a jewelled casket, which he attempts to clasp, with an expression of infantine pleasure. The crown and sceptre of the king are at the Virgin's feet. Two pages sustain the train of the heavily embroidered royal robe. The back ground is crowded with soldiers, attendants, horses and camels. In front is an ox, strangely out of place amid such splendor.

This picture is a fine specimen of rich and brilliant color and pure flesh painting; the head of the old King too, is very noble; but, as a whole, the composition is not well suited to the subject, neither have the heads a properly distinctive character. The Virgin's face in particular must strike every one by its expression of mere courtly refinement and tame elegance. As a face it is well painted; as the portrait of a court lady, which it very probably was, it is admirable; but as the Virgin Mother of Christ it is nought. A sameness of expression in the different faces is very noticeable in this picture; the mouths indeed seem all to be taken from one model. The head of JOSEPH is a portrait of RUBENS.

PORTRAIT OF A PRINCE IN ARMOR.

This is supposed to be Prince RUPERT. It is an admirable specimen of VANDYKE's charming grace and elegance, as well as of the combined richness and delicacy of his flesh tints and his ability to give to his portraits a look of individuality and life. This head, though evidently not that of a man possessing very strong character, has a presence. We feel that we are before an intelligent being and not a painted canvass. The full fresh lip of healthful youth is finely expressed, and the modelling of the head throughout is excellent.

It is very interesting to trace the identity of the subject of this portrait with that of the engraving from the same Master in LODGE's great work, and another engraving after Sir PETER LELY, which is prefixed to the life of Prince RUPERT. In the first, the Prince is younger by a year or two; in the second, he is in the decline of life, but the identity of the individual is pleasingly manifest.

JORDAENS.

THE SATYR AND THE MAN BLOWING HOT AND COLD.

There can be few persons who have not heard the fable of the Satyr who kicked a traveller out of his cave, because he first blew his fingers to warm them, and afterwards his porridge to cool it; the Satyr declaring that he would not have a man under his roof who blew hot and cold with the same breath.

The subject was congenial to JORDAENS, and he has treated it with the fullest effect of his free, bold and humorous pencil. The composition is of six figures, the Satyr, his guest, two females, a child and an attendant. The guest is blowing vigorously the porridge in his horn spoon, and his Sylvan host is grinning at him in a style which fully justifies the proverbial expression "to grin like a Satyr"; the old woman opposite him is enjoying the joke most heartily, as does also the attendant in the back ground, who applies his fingers to his nose in a manner well known, and which seems to have come down to us from remote antiquity. The woman in the centre of the group "doing maternity" to her chubby child, has an expression only of good nature and rude health. The firm springiness of the flesh, particularly in the figure of the Satyr, the ease of the composition, the true though coarse humor which pervades the group, the fine drawing and strong, healthy toned color in this picture must win it admiration in spite of the grossness of its details. The traveller's dog growling at the Satyr is a felicitous and well managed accessory.

This Picture is a repetition of one in the Gallery at Munich; the composition of which, however, is materially different, as may be seen by the Engraving in this Gallery.

LOT AND HIS DAUGHTERS.

The unpleasant story of this Scriptural subject is too well known to require repetition. This picture is without doubt one of the most beautiful specimens of the school to which it belongs; in composition it is easy and effective, in color truly splendid and in *chiaroscuro* absolutely marvellous.

The head of the old man just coming under the influence of excessive wine could hardly be surpassed for truth of expression, and the figure of the daughter in the foreground attains almost to perfection in form, color and *chiaroscuro*. CORREGGIO it seems could hardly have surpassed the *morbidezza* of this flesh. The draperies throughout the picture are finely disposed and painted in a few simple and well distributed colors. The beautifully painted viands upon the table are evidently from the hand of SNYDERS.

This picture, though signed "P. P. RUBENS, 1624," has been decided by the authorities mentioned in the Preface to be by JORDAENS; but even in the face of such opinions, the Author cannot forbear the suggestion that it is too fine a work for that Master. Sensual enough for him it certainly is, but there is a refinement in its sensuality which could hardly come from the painter of 'Blowing Hot and Cold.' There is grandeur in it despite the shamefulness of the subject, and grace despite its grossness. The artist who could paint the female figure and drapery in the foreground held no second rate pencil.

SPANISH SCHOOL.

There are but three specimens of this School in the Collection; one by VELASQUEZ, the head of the School of Madrid, and two by his pupil, MURILLO, who became the founder of the School of Seville. The Spanish Masters excelled as colorists. Their works are less known out of their own country than those of the Painters of other nation.

THE ASCENSION OF THE VIRGIN.*

This sweet picture is a specimen of the second manner of MURILLO, in which the influence of the glowing pencil of TITIAN upon his imagination is most apparent. The composition was a favorite one with him, and he is known to have executed several works varying very little in general arrangement from this. The Virgin is seen in mid-heaven with face upturned and with gesture expressive of resignation and tranquil expectation. Beneath her feet is the inverted crescent and around her are troops of cherubs. She is clothed in a white garment over which a deep blue robe is thrown, affording a mass of cool color which subdues and harmonizes finely the warm tints which elsewhere pervade the picture. Far down in the distance the Escorial is seen.

Richness of color and sweetness of expression are the chief characteristics of this fine work, the most remarkable beauties of which however are to be found in the cherubs which hover around the feet of the principal figure. These are very lovely indeed, full of purity and a playful grace. They are in every variety of position and some of the heads are remarkably fine specimens of fore-sortening. Directly beneath the Virgin's feet is one head which is exquisitely beautiful in its color and expression of childish innocence and happiness.

This work should be examined from a distance, otherwise the effect of the Virgin's upturned face is lost.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

This large picture, about the authenticity of which there is not a doubt, is in the last and best manner of the Master.

The Virgin Mother is mounted on the ass with the Infant CHRIST sitting upon her knee. The animal is led by an Angel who points the way with gestures and mien of encouragement. JOSEPH follows on foot with a staff, at the side of the animal, expressing in face and attitude his confidence in the Heavenly guide. Above, three cherubs hover beneath the leaves of a palm with looks of sweet and tender interest. In the distance is the Desert.

The clear, soft and silvery tone of color which was MURILLO's last and perfected style strikes the eye at first view of this picture; it will be remarked too that as in the 'Ascension of the Virgin,' the tone of which is warmer and more glowing, a large mass of cool color is introduced, here, with admirable adaptation, the draperies are of a warmer hue. On close examination, two points in the picture

* Mr. White has miscalled this picture the "ASCENSION OF THE VIRGIN." It is one of the several pictures by the Master of his favorite subject entitled the "IMMACULATE CONCEPTION," with deliberate variations in the details from the well known repetitions in the Louvre and at the Hague. The "Ascension" or "Assumption" is quite another subject.

I have an engraving of the "Assumption" by MURILLO which was formerly in SIR ROBERT WALPOLE's Collection at HOUGHTON. It was sold to the EMPRESS CATHERINE OF RUSSIA, I believe, and may have been lost with other pictures in the North Sea. In this picture the arms and hands are very differently disposed, serving to express upward motion, the head is less thrown upward and has less of the bratific and wrapt expression than the Conception in my Collection; and, finally, the "crescent Moon" of the latter is wholly wanting.

G. N. JR.

will be remarked which are strongly corroborating proofs of its authenticity. These are the appearance through the last coat of paint of an erased foot of the ass and the fingers of the Virgin's left hand. The Master, after drawing them once, changed his intent as to their position and has not sufficiently obliterated the first design. No copyist would make a mistake of this kind. Such marks, as evidences of originality, add to rather than detract from the value of a work; they are clearly indicative of the hasty execution of an artist too much occupied, or perhaps too hardly pressed for the picture by his patron, to retain it under his eye until all the results of his work became manifest.

The unmistakeable sentiment and color of MURILLO in this picture could hardly have a stronger testimonial than in the following portion of a letter from our distinguished countryman, WASHINGTON IRVING, who, it will be remembered, has twice resided in Spain, once as our Minister at that Court.

"I recollect being generally very well pleased [with the collection]; but the only painting, at this distance of time, which remains strongly impressed on my recollection, is the "Flight into Egypt." This I consider an original MURILLO, and one in his best manner; and I was the more struck by it from having, during my two residences in Spain, become extremely fond of the works of that master."

The reader has before found in the notes two Sonnets which were the expression of feeling awakened by the contemplation of two other works in the Collection; the following, from the same pen, is so imbued with the spirit of the subject of this picture that it is embodied in this notice as its most appropriate place:—

SONNET.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

HAIL! holy group! wending with weary feet,
Yet led of Heaven, along the desert road;
The Virgin Mother, with the Infant God!
She, with a look so sad, yet calmly sweet—
The hand outstretched, half-reverence, half-caress—
The deep, forecasting eyes, bent o'er his face,
As if the wondrous future she could trace
Clear written there: He, full of tenderness,
The Saviour imaged in the yearning child,
Still by their side the faithful Joseph fares;
And seems the beast, with patient step and mild,
As conscious of the sacred load he bears,—
So speed they, while the guardian host above
Beckon them on, with wings of hovering love.

NOTE.

The foregoing pages contain notices of some only, of the principal Pictures in the Collection to which the Author under-took to prepare a Companion. He did so, of course, upon the supposition, that the Collection was to remain in this country, and be open to the public according to the design of its liberal and enthusiastic proprietor. But, when the Companion was half completed, that gentleman was summoned by business to the other continent, and the announcement so disheartening to the lovers of Art, was made, that the Collection must be taken to Europe and there dispersed for want of encouragement from those to whom its proprietor had the right to look for aid in his design of establishing here a Public Gallery based upon his Pictures, one-quarter of the assessed value of which he most generously offered as his contribution to such a Gallery.

But, by the opportune liberality of a few gentlemen, this alternative was avoided, at least for a time, and an effort is to be made to retain this fine Collection permanently in the United States. The first leaves of the Companion are published with the hope that they may be somewhat instrumental in furthering this enlightened project."

EXTRACT of a letter commenting upon the notice* of the *Gallery* contained in the introduction to the Catalogue—(pages 23 and 24)—which, although discovering mature technical knowledge, and evincing much patience of investigation and much true feeling, appeared to the writer of the letter to want completeness, in that it refers the excellencies of the works to the standard of nature merely,—thus stopping short of that higher excellence in Art which is "something more and better than nature," and which is more clearly defined in one ‡ of the following papers as "creation in the beautiful:"

The writer of the letter says:—

"His notion (as I gather from the article) is, that nature is the true standard in our judgment of such works as *Titian's St. Lawrence*, and he limits himself to this view of the subject in enlarging upon technical merits and those which he would make more comprehensible to the common observer.

"No doubt he writes understandingly, in so far as nature (in her ordinary manifestations) goes in such works as your *Titian* and *Murillo*; but the grand element of these pictures—that which gives them their powerful impression—is that which is above nature, the supernatural ideas they convey,—without which there might be *chiar' oscuro* and other merits of mere colour and execution, but no soul as now. *Murillo's Virgin* is the *Mother of Jesus Christ*, of the *God-man* and her face blends thus reverence and affection.† *Titian's Saint*, if you view the agonized yet heroic attitude of the limbs,—the fixed, enduring calmness of the eye, that seems, amid the pains of the body, to be filled with the light of a heavenly vision,—embodies the power of Christian faith.

"It is thus that *Christianity* ensouls *Art*; and from this point of view, inward and spiritual, we are to learn the beauty of the greatest works of the *Great Masters*."

NOTE.—The writer of the letter seems to differ from the author of the article—though it may appear to be rather in degree than in fact—in that the latter (who, it should be observed, writes like an artist) speaks of the *Titian* as though he considered its greatest merit to consist in its peculiar and truly wonderful *chiar' oscuro*, which, it should be observed, is rather the means than the end, although in itself considered a great achievement; but the last paragraph of the article is not without indications of that profound feeling with which the former was inspired, for in it we find that *expression* is carefully considered. *Vide* the following extracts:—

"In composition, the figures are grouped with an effect and dignity of action truly in character with the affecting scene. The drawing is firm and decided—every boundary has the clear, sharp outline of nature, and every line has a distinct meaning. In expression, it almost approaches the height which it occupies in *chiar' oscuro*. The same unity which characterizes the effect may be observed in the expression. Every person seems engaged in connection with the grand ideas of the subject, and even the horses express, in their countenances, a degree of sympathy, and appear sensible of the heart-rending scene which is being enacted."

* Which was written in October, and before the additions.

+ Or Mary, with the Christ of Nazareth
Held close in her caress,
Whose pilgrimage of hope and love and faith
Illumed the wilderness.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

‡ *Extract of an article from the Massachusetts Quarterly Review.*

"Without entering at this time more fully into particulars of the various renovations and ideas that have infused, from time to time, new blood into the body of Art, we now come to a phase of Art peculiar to our own time.

"An earnest, yet complex and self-conscious age, looking diligently for light and aid in all directions, recognizes in its Poets and Artists a false aim, a want of true inspiration, a frigidity and artifice resulting from the worn-out traditions of elder schools. It demands a more earnest aim, a greater faithfulness; in a word, a return to Nature. Now this demand is founded in a partial perception of truth, and leads to an error not the less inveterate that it is respectable. It arises from the belief that high Art is but an imitation and selection from exalted Nature; whereas the soul of Art is, as has been said, 'Creation in the beautiful.' This error appears very natural so long as we regard the imitative Arts only; for their faithful imitation being the most obvious, comes to be regarded as the essential requisite. But turn to Architecture; when this Art becomes degraded, what Nature can we return to, save the Idea we have in our own mind of the true and beautiful; we are not to return to Nature, but to Art; and this return it is the province of Genius to accomplish.

The same is true of Music. If, then, there are Arts in which there is no imitation of Nature, it follows that this imitation cannot be the essence, but the only form which Art adopts; for the essence of all Arts must be the same."

From Smith's Catalogue-Raïsonné of the Works of Rubens.

THE HOLY FAMILY. No. 72 in this Gallery.

"The Virgin, habited in a scarlet dress with blue sleeves, is seen in a profile view, seated, holding the infant Saviour, naked, in her arms, and at the same time fondly pressing him to her bosom; the child is placing its hand on his mother's face; St. John, wearing the skin of an animal round his loins, stands in front of the Virgin's knees, looking affectionately at the Saviour; St. Joseph, clad in a gray mantle, is on the farther side of this group, caressing a lamb; and St. Elizabeth is behind the Virgin, leaning both hands on the top of a cradle, which is placed close to the front. This is an example of the highest excellence." 6 feet 6 inches by 4 feet 6 inches, on canvas.

"Engraved by Vosterman, 1620; and in reverse anonymous.

"A drawing in India Ink, perfected by the master, is in the Musée at Paris.

"A duplicate of the preceding picture, of much smaller dimensions (3 feet 9 inches by 3 feet 6 inches) was sold in the Poulain Collection, and is engraved in that Gallery."

The above description, it will be seen, applies in all respects to the Picture No. 72 in this Gallery; and the date of the Engraving mentioned shows the correctness of Captain Payne's judgment in describing it as an early production of the master. The size of it (being 4 feet 2 inches by 3 feet,) is between the two above mentioned by Smith; but as he seems not to know where the first named was, there may have been some error in the statement of the dimensions.

A gentleman of this city remembers having seen this picture sold in *Paris* in 1818 for a large sum of money.

THE PORTRAIT OF PRINCE RUPERT—By VAN DYCK—No. 61.

May be best described by the following critical remarks from Hazlitt's Essays—and the remark in the extract regarding the *Gevartius*, as a fine imitation of Rubens' 'florid manner,' may be applied to the next work by VAN DYCK—No. 62.

"This* same portrait is not, we think, the truest specimen of Van Dyck. It has not his mild, pensive, somewhat effeminate cast of colour and expression. His best portraits have an air of faded gentility about them. The *Gevartius* has too many streaks of blood-colour, too many marks of the pencil, to convey an exact idea of Van Dyck's characteristic excellence; though it is a fine imitation of Rubens' florid manner. Van Dyck's most striking portraits are those which look just like a gentleman or lady seen in a looking-glass and neither more nor less."

From De Burtin's Treatise on the Knowledge necessary to Amateurs in Pictures.

"In paintings, a touch large or contracted, dashing or careful, drawn or stamped, though remaining always the same in its denomination, will differ in its formation under the pencil of each artist, as a piece of penmanship of the same subject may remain flowing round, or regular, and yet differ under the pen of each writer. However many hands there may be to guide the pen or the pencil, they produce the same forms by as many different manners of handling; which manners characterize them individually, and serve to make their works known to those who are familiar with them. From this it is that true connoisseurs can scarcely be deceived by copies. For if the imitator be but an indifferent painter, he will betray himself by the constraint and timidity of his touch; if on the contrary, he is an artist truly expert, it is impossible for him, whatever attention he may give, not to mingle here and there, from forgetfulness or impatience, his own touch with that of the original, especially in those parts of the picture which require the least caution, such as the ground, the distance, the hair of the head, and other similar parts. These are with reason the parts in which the true connoisseur seeks particularly to unmask the copyist. Such are probably the reasons which have led Pliny to say, in his 28th letter of the 5th book, '*That it is infinitely more difficult to copy a picture exactly, than to imitate nature faithfully.*'"

* That of *Gevartius*.—now in the National Gallery of England.

This extract from De Burtin, (one of the highest authorities on the points in question,) when considered with the other papers confirmatory of its statements, contained in the second edition of the Catalogue, will serve to convince, it is believed, every candid person that the principal Paintings in this collection are "the veritable Works of the Great Masters to whom they are attributed,"—as has elsewhere been written of them,—“many of their peculiar excellencies of colour and expression being such as must be beyond the powers of the most skilful professional copyist.”

No intelligible reasons, derived from the Works themselves, have been given for doubting their originality; whilst, on the other hand, the spontaneous acknowledgment by many persons, including those who have been most conversant with the Works of the Great Masters abroad, of the impression made upon them by the Works,—an impression that obtains in despite of prejudice, and that deepens with repeated studies of them,—is in itself testimony of their originality of the highest value.

That there should have been a hesitation in regard to this before viewing them is natural, in the absence of any publication of their history; and it is for this reason—that *in the presence of these preconceived doubts, which offer a precise contrast to the circumstances of perfect faith under which visitors view the public collections of Europe**—that the acknowledged convictions of those who most carefully inspected and studied the Works, form the best possible testimony of their value.

The proprietor can now only repeat his conviction that the opinions of Captain Payne, upon which the Catalogue is made up, are perfectly reliable:—They correspond with the history of the respective Pictures, so far as that is known, in almost every important instance; and he is willing to abide by his declaration, elsewhere made, and forfeit to the State or City every Picture which shall be found by competent judges incorrectly named in the Catalogue, provided that the other Works shall be taken at their real value, to form a permanent Gallery.

This guaranty, taken with the proofs of the value and worthiness of the Collection, already presented in the introduction to the Catalogue, and the universal acknowledgment of its superiority to every other one ever seen in this country, may be considered superfluous; but is freely offered, with the hope that it may be acceptable to the sensible lovers of Art, and to public spirited citizens generally."

NOTE.—Several other able notices of the Collection have appeared in *The Home Journal*, *Evening Post*, *Day Book*, &c. &c., but as they generally contain comparisons with other Exhibitions they are not reproduced here.

* The disadvantage under which my Collection labored was also heightened by the want of the usual surroundings of European Collections:—As the observant Mr. Hillard says, in his classical and *con amore* "Six Months in Italy":—"The eye asks in vain for those noble spaces and splendid embellishments of the Vatican, which enhance the merits of fine specimens and shield the defects of inferior works." G. N. Jr.

POST-SCRIPT.

In the Spring of 1850, as has already been stated by Mr. White, I was compelled by the paramount calls of duty to return to China, a necessity that involved more painful sacrifices of feeling than those who view Art as a mere matter of fancy can conceive of. If, however, the consequences of this necessity had been merely personal to myself, I should now have no need to allude to them; but, unfortunately, they were fatally detrimental to the purpose, which from year to year I had cherished, of effecting the permanent establishment of my Collection in the United-States as the nucleus of a National Gallery of Art.

In this endeavor I had the sympathy of many gifted minds, which was a support and solace in presence of the lukewarmness of those whose pecuniary aid would at once have secured to New York or the Nation the attainment of an object of the highest importance.

In recognition of this object, at the eve of my departure, several Gentlemen, whose names I gratefully record here, earnestly interested themselves:—I allude to the

*Honorable Senator Dix,
Robert B. Minturn, Esquire,
Henry T. Tuckerman, Esquire, and those accomplish-
ed Artists
Henry Peters Gray and
Miner K. Kellogg:—One of them drew up Articles
of association and another wrote the following Preamble of a*

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ART.

and the project seemed in a fair way toward success when, on the 4th of June 1850, I embarked for China via Europe.

Soon after, the principal of my Pictures were exhibited in conjunction with the Collection of the "New York Gallery of the Fine Arts" at the new Galleries of the "National Academy of Design" in Broadway opposite Bond Street; and circular invitation cards were sent to all Gentlemen who by their wealth, position, or interest in Art, could be expected to aid in the establishment of the proposed INSTITUTE.

In a few weeks it was found that little or no progress was made in the subscriptions; and that the project required more active personal canvass than any were willing to undertake:—And subsequently my friends wrote me that my personal efforts on the spot were a necessity of success.

I confess that with all my previous experience of the difficulty in New-York to concentrate attention and public or general interest, the non-success of the worthy Gentlemen who had undertaken the promotion of this truly National object was a new surprise and a grievous disappointment to me.

It had appeared to all with whom I had conversed on the subject that the Articles of Association were unexceptionable. So far as I had any individual interest in them, they were to the effect that Appraisers of the Pictures should be employed—to come from Europe if thought necessary—to estimate the value of the Collection, and that my contribution toward the founding of the Institute should be one quarter of this valuation.

The result was that the Collection was left upon my hands and has thus been kept in New-York a period of nearly ten years.

The fresh disappointment thus encountered was soon mitigated by the success of my business operations, to which I had devoted myself under the incentives of duty and of a renewed natural inclination, to the exclusion of attention to though not in forgetfulness of Art: and I fairly entertained hopes of being able, not only to retain the Collection permanently, but to shrine it in a suitable edifice.

But these hopes along with all others resting upon my material prosperity were crushed by the "Russian War": and I have now left to myself only the satisfaction of having striven—it may be "not wisely, but too well"—to somewhat serve my Country.—

Did I say only this satisfaction?—Nay!—I should thereby greatly wrong my own consciousness of the beneficent culture of both heart and mind; and above all I should thus unjustly and ungratefully ignore the warm acknowledgments of others—of many persons whose memories I cherish in the distant abiding place where I sought to work out hopes common to us both—some of whom have in the foregoing writings asserted the dignity of Art and the worthiness of my contribution to its promotion.

Yes—satisfactions deep and lasting were derived from the possession of these Great Pictures and from the cherished hopes of their retention. Well do I remember, among the greater joys of my life, beholding the beaming faces of delighted surprise with which Artists and other glance-apprehending natures looked upon the Collection for the first time!—But most I prize the matured judgment of those who have in the foregoing pages set forth the intrinsic merits of my Pictures;—and pointed out the marvellous achievements in color and in sentiment in the awe-inspiring TITIAN; the majestic power of RUBENS' "RESURRECTION"; the saintly purity and maternal grace of MURILLO'S "Flight," and the sublime pathos of his IMMACULATE CONCEPTION; the splendid color of VAN DYCK'S "ADORATION"; the stately purity of LUDOVICO'S SAINT CATHERINE: the chaste beauty of BARTOLOMEO'S "Nativity:—

Of these, and of the other 80 or more valuable Pictures, these writers have thus commendingly spoken; and several thousand persons beside have certified approvingly in a Lyceum Gallery Book which is now before me.

Such are the sources of solace and satisfaction now that I am constrained by duties of a pecuniary nature to part with these noble Pictures.

The object with which I commenced this compilation was to avert the sacrifice of the Collection which I had accidentally heard of the re-exhibition of in New-York; but after the most of these Papers had been printed I was informed of the intention to sell them by Auction at that city, and I tremble to hear the result of such a sale.

There will thus have been scattered in a day a Collection that it took a devotee of Art 30 to 40 years to bring together, one who was in the habit of leaving his family for months in his searches throughout Europe for specimens of the various Schools, and who thus and by patient "weeding out" was enabled to form a Gallery remarkably complete for its extent in first class and good examples of the several Schools of the best period of Art.

I may fearlessly declare that by this dispersion there is lost to the public of New-York and of the Nation a source of refinement and of moral and religious culture of inestimable value, in itself; and which as a nucleus would have yearly attracted valuable additions by bequests and otherwise:—Nor is it easy to reconcile one's mind to such a result of one's efforts when it is remembered that but a mere fraction of the enormous sums lavished upon Foreign Theatrical performers or upon "Negro Minstrels," annually, would have sufficed for its retention.

I shall institute no comparison between the two objects—it sufficeth to suggest it; but leave to those who have less personal interest in these Pictures and who are, at the same time, capable from natural endowment and acquired judgment, to estimate and apportion relatively the cost of each against the respective benefits or results to the public. For myself I have only to add that every rap of the Auctioneer strikes my heart strings:—and not for myself alone, for a true love (and as such is the test I may say it of myself without presumption)—a full comprehension—of Art excludes a selfish spirit.

MACAO, JUNE, 1858.

GIDEON NYE, JR.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ART.

PREAMBLE.

Although several Institutions devoted to the cause of Art, exist and flourish in the United States, they either represent a special interest, or are conducted upon principles which limit the scope of their usefulness: Thus Art-Unions, popular and useful as they are, are restricted in their agency to the welfare of native Artists, and the disposal of American pictures; and local Academies, it is well known, exert but a limited, though auspicious influence on Art in general. Recent discussions between the friends of rival institutions have, also, made evident the need of one so constituted as to form a broader platform, whereon the people can freely enjoy Art as in Europe. We require that the eclectic spirit of the age should find its representative in some Institution of a National character, devoted to this great interest. Artists feel the want of a public Temple, to which they can resort for improvement in their vocation, and of an Institution which shall hold out to them incentives, in the assurance of rewards and due appreciation, to the highest emanations of their skill and genius. The want of a permanent exhibition of a Collection of Exemplars, is felt by all who have considered the subject, or regarded the testimony of the most enlightened statesmen of other nations. There are, indeed, but few persons who will not perceive the immense benefit to taste, refinement and popular culture of a National Gallery, permanent, judiciously arranged and carefully kept—open to the student, the traveller, and the citizen—like those in Florence; or the importance of the pecuniary gain to a city, from the attraction that it offers to travellers.

The great obstacle to such a plan, hitherto, has been the length of time required to collect a sufficient number of works of a standard character; and this delay is now obviated by the collection of the Old Masters now here, which will form at once, a basis or nucleus to which will gradually tend, not only the temporary contributions of native artists, but the bequests of those collectors who are now often obliged to distribute and sacrifice Galleries by will, which they would gladly bequeathe to a National Gallery, if its character and permanency were established*.

* The vast importance of this to a country, cannot be better illustrated, than by the instance of the bequest of Mr. STANDISH, of Duxbury Park, Lancashire, to the King of the French, of his noble collection, (which is now in the Louvre, and known as the "COLLECTION STANDISH") for the reason that there was no suitable receptacle for them in England open to the public!

PAPERS AND NOTES

UPON

ART AND ART CRITICISM.

"Beautie is not as fond men misdeeme.
An outward show of things that only seeme.

.....
Vouchsafe, then, O Thou most Almighty Spright !
From whom all gifts of wit and knowledge flow,
To shed into my breast some sparkling light
Of thine Eternall Truth, that I may show
Some little beames to mortall eyes below
Of that immortall Beautie, there with Thee,
Which in my weake distraughted mynd I see."

Spenser.

OF WASHINGTON ALLSTON—MRS. JAMESON SAYS:—"His feeling for what the grand Old Masters had achieved, was deep, was genuine. They grew upon his mind, as they do on all minds large enough to take them in — — — — —"

"In speaking of the individuality which the Old Masters threw into their works, he said:—"This power of infusing one's own life, as it were, into that which is feigned, appears to me the prerogative of Genius alone. In a work of Art, it is what a man may well call his own, for it cannot be borrowed or imitated."

"The duration and stability of the fame of the Old Masters is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but is bound to the human heart by every chord of sympathetic approbation." *Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

Extracts from the Author's Preface to the Second Edition of "Modern Painters," by John Ruskin.

"Respect for the ancients is the salvation of Art."

"The whole system and discipline of Art, the collected results of the experience of ages, might, but for the fixed authority of antiquity, be swept away by the rage of fashion, or lost in the glare of novelty; and the knowledge which it has taken centuries to accumulate, the principles which mighty minds had arrived at only in dying, might be overthrown by the frenzy of a faction, and abandoned in the insolence of an hour."

"Better, brighter times are at hand: let us hope so; and of one thing let us be assured, that such times will not come by the vain attempt to pull down the grand Old Masters from 'their pride of place,' or by accomplishing this, if it were possible." Mrs. Jameson.

"THE name of ARTIST, as applied to Goethe, is familiar to all the world. This title was owing not so much to the artistic feeling and knowledge conspicuous in his great works, as to those admirable writings, in which the nature of Art, and its relations to Man and to Life, are developed. In fact, in his prose writings this subject is rarely forgotten, and if it shall seem to any one that an undue portion of his intellectual activity was devoted to its development, a careful study of his works will make it appear that Art is with him not a single side of humanity, but a medium for viewing all humanity, a core around which all knowledge, all experience, all science, all the ideal as well as all the practical of our nature, arrange themselves into one harmonious whole, which in the desultory acquirements of men so often stand in contradiction. It is in this view, that Art, as a part of cultivation, is deserving of that large place which he has given to it." SAMUEL GRAY WARD, Esq.

"All the productions of Art, from the time it has been directed and developed by the Christian influences, may be regarded under three different aspects:—1st. The purely religious aspect, which belongs to one mode of faith:—2d. The poetical aspect, which belongs to all:—3d. The artistic, which is the individual point of view, and has reference only to the action of the intellect on the means and material employed. There is a pleasure, an intense pleasure, merely in the consideration of Art, as Art: in the faculty of comparison and nice discrimination brought to bear on objects of beauty; in the exercise of a cultivated and refined taste on the productions of mind in any form whatever. But a threefold, or rather a thousand-fold, pleasure is theirs, who to a sense of the poetical unite a sympathy with the spiritual in Art, and who combine with a delicacy of perception and technical knowledge, more elevated sources of pleasure, more variety of association, habits of more excursive thought. Let none imagine, however, that in placing before the uninitiated these unpretending volumes, I assume any such superiority as is here implied. Like a child that has sprang on a little way before its playmates, and caught a glimpse through an opening portal of some varied Eden within, all gay with flowers, and musical with birds, and haunted by divine shapes which beckon forward, and after one rapturous survey, runs back and catches its companions by the hand, and hurries them forward to share the new-found pleasure, the yet unexplored region of delight: even so it is with me: I am on the outside, not the inside, of the door I open." Mrs. Jamieson's "Sacred and Legendary Art."

AN ELOQUENT SURVEY OF THE RISE OF CHRISTIAN ART.

"Byzantine art, as we have said, at once of classic art the grave and of Christian the cradle; but, strange to say, as we have already seen, one thousand years had passed away since the birth of Christ, and yet Christian art still slumbered in precarious infancy—a sleep, too, which had the semblance of death. But the hour of its awakening growth had come. The intelligence of Italy, bursting into new life, expressed itself in a newly-created beauty. Christian art then first began to make itself worthy of the country of its nativity, to take from the Italian sky its serenity, from the Italian mind its ardour and imagination. The thoughts which gained from the poet the melody of words, sought from the painter the beauty of forms; and the epic which described paradise, purgatory, and hell, inspired the pictures of Giotto and Orgagna, where Christ, come to judge the world, assigns to man his happiness or woe. But the poetic thought was naturally matured before the pictorial form; and thus while Dante wrote in the thirteenth century, Leonardo, Raphael, and Michael Angelo did not paint till the fifteenth. By what gradual steps and successive stages the poetry of Christian truths developed themselves into matured and perfect pictorial forms, has always seemed to us an inquiry of the most vital interest: How far the progression of Christian art was resultant from the advancement of civilisation; how far dependent upon the revival of classic learning, or upon a renewed appeal to nature; how far incident to the characteristics of race or the beauties of climate; how much the offspring of a sensuous and imaginative religion; or, finally, to what extent the independent creation of those great artists, who seem to have come, as it were, by a special providence just when most wanted.

In one sense, as we have seen, the death of classic art was the birth of the Christian. It was perhaps fortunate that the old civilisation should die out, in order that the new, unencumbered by the past, might be moulded into the spiritual types of the Christian faith.

Nevertheless, Byzantine art, the extinction of the classic, formed for the Christian the matrix of its new birth. The Byzantine Madonna, described by M. Rio, as of "blackish hue, dressed in oriental manner, in a style much resembling that of the Chinese," was, in fact, the rude type and germ of that spiritual beauty in which she was at last exalted as the queen of heaven, and the worshipped of earth. With what ardour does the student trace the progressive steps from this first repulsive form to the last perfected beauty—from a Madonna painted by St. Luke to the "Virgin most pure" of Angelico or Perugino—"Thou resplendent star, which shinest o'er the main, blest Mother of our God, and ever Virgin Queen!"* With what tender watchfulness does the traveller in Italy mark the gradual transitions from the lowest type of womanhood to the purity which belongs to heavenly love, and that beauty which, is religion! It were, indeed, a labour of no common interest to trace, with the progressive growth of Italian art and civilisation, the corresponding exaltation of each Christian portraiture; how the St. John became more worthy of the Saviour's love; how St. Peter grew into the rock of the Church; with what power and dignity St. Paul bore the sword of the Spirit; and, finally, as the highest consummation, how divinity shone through the features of the Saviour's face.

The manner and the means by which Christian art thus rose into life, health, and beauty, out of the sicklied cradle of the dark ages, where it so long slumbered in the night—the laws which thus governed its organic growth, open a sphere to criticism both subtle and extended. Entering on such a labour, we should trace and strive to determine those subtle laws of nature by which the immaterial thought and emotion so wondrously mould themselves into form and expression of the human countenance and frame. We should have to investigate the relation subsisting between representative minds and typical heads, to determine the development and the features suited to the prophet or the apostle; and thus ascending from the earthly to the heavenly, to construct out of men angels, and to transmute the natural body into the incorruptible body of the resurrection. Thus we should deal with the motives of men and angels, with the laws which govern the natural kingdom of the earth, and sway the supernatural kingdom of the heavens.

In this extended system of art philosophy, as written in the progressive history of art-development, having determined the framework and functions of the body, natural and spiritual, we must penetrate beneath the surface to the phases and movements of the soul itself. In those greatest,

because most difficult and most comprehensive, of art creations, *the Last Judgments*, which, from the twelfth century down to the present times, have been continuously represented both in painting and sculpture. We find the souls of all created beings, men, angels, demons, under every possible emotion of surprise, ecstasy, or damnation. We need scarcely say that it becomes a question of much metaphysical subtlety, to determine how an angel would have acted, felt, or appeared when Christ, as judge, entered the heavenly choir—whether the righteous, when first they caught the splendour of the beatific vision, would have fallen on their knees in worship, have raised their hands in wonder, or covered their faces from excess of light; whether the lost, still as archangels, though ruined, would assemble in war against the Highest, or whether, as in the paintings of the middle ages, they at once should fall into the form of demon-monsters stung by scorpions and tormented by flames. Such questions, we say, cease to be merely artistic, and become a portion of human and divine philosophy dependent upon the nature and attributes of God, men, and angels. Having thus dealt with the laws of man's material body, and of his immaterial spirit, in their relation to art-treatment, it were necessary to examine how art has, from age to age, conducted itself; what laws, whether natural or artificial, it has observed or violated; how far the bodily framework of art has been consonant with the material structure of the world; to what extent art's inner and spiritual existence has shown itself accordant with the spiritual laws which govern in man and actuate in God. Christian art thus regarded takes in the entire range of its existence, as it were, an individual personality, possessing an individual body and soul capable of growth and of decay, cradled, as we have seen, in the fresco catacomb, or in the mosaic church, then walking the earth in strength and beauty, teaching men to live righteously and die blessedly; and again, as we have not now time to show, falling into decrepitude, and finally sinking into the common grave of Italian greatness, where it still lies in death, if without the hope of resurrection, at least leaving upon earth a blessed memory.

In this somewhat discursive paper we have treated of the vicissitudes and struggles of Christian art in those early days when the open grave was eager to receive the precarious birth which the cradle seemed in vain to nurture into life. We have seen that, the Church driven to the Catacombs, persecution not only involved Christian art in darkness, but threatened it with extinction.

This first danger being passed, a second scarcely less fatal, and in duration more protracted, seemed to entail on the years of infancy the decrepitude of age. The nascent art, instead of starting into life with the vital impulse of the new religion, became, for well-nigh one thousand years, implicated in the downfall and wreck of the Roman empire; and thus, as we have seen, Roman-Christian and Byzantine works long distorted and disgraced the beauty and the truth of the otherwise triumphant revelation. But when Italy, again rising out of ruins, asserted for a second time, in supremacy of genius, her right to the empire of the world, Christian art once more rose from the grave, and was borne exulting, on the topmost wave of the incoming civilisation. All the glory of Italy then fervently spoke in the language of art. The Italian clime, in its beauty and intensity; the Italian manners, in their grace and charm; the Italian mind, in its ardent warmth and fertile imagination; the Italian religion, in its passion for scenic show—all that constituted the wealth, and the glory, and the poetry of Italy, obtained through art adequate expression.

In the preceding narrative of the early stages of this national art, we have marked the laws which governed the vicissitudes both of its rise and fall—have seen how those laws were linked with the destiny of empire, and involved in the first principle of human action. In such a survey the rules of art are but the universal experience of mankind; the painted picture but a portion of the enacted life; the country of a people's home, the current of a people's history, their affections, their hopes, and their fears, all giving to art its character and expression. Thus, as we have shown, the philosophy of art is but a portion of the wider philosophy of man and of nature, having the two aspects of matter and of spirit—the two habitations of earth and of heaven: and thus likewise have we seen that Christian art, uniting into one visible form these two aspects of matter and of spirit, found a habitation on earth, and gained its access to heaven, in the land of Italy.*

* See *Are Maris Stella*, and see likewise Fra Angelico's *Madonna della Stella*, in the Sacristy of Sta Maria Novella, Florence.
(Extracted from *Blackwoods Magazine*.)

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